Siddha Meditation

Commentaries on the Shivasutras and other Sacred Texts

by Swami Muktananda

Shree Gurudev Ashram

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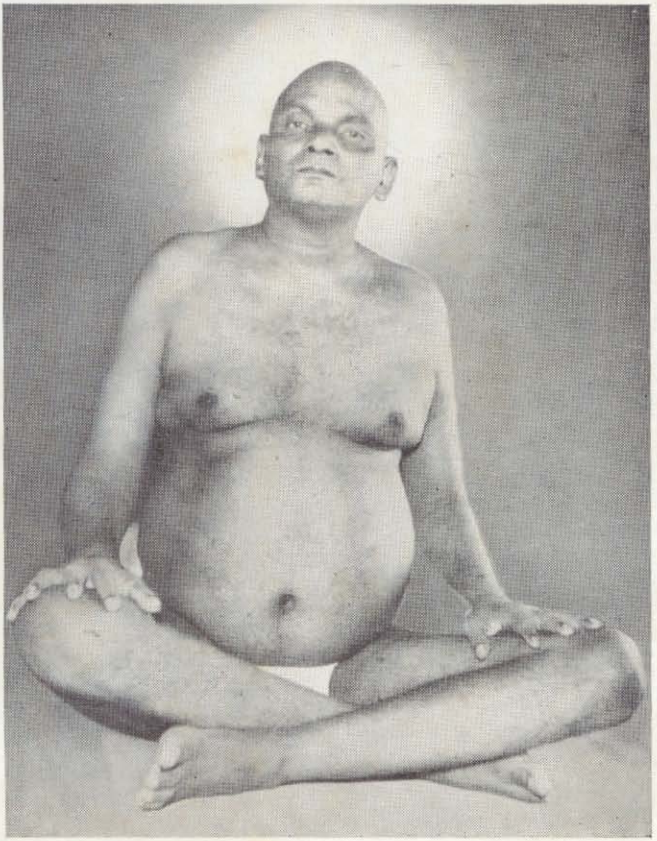

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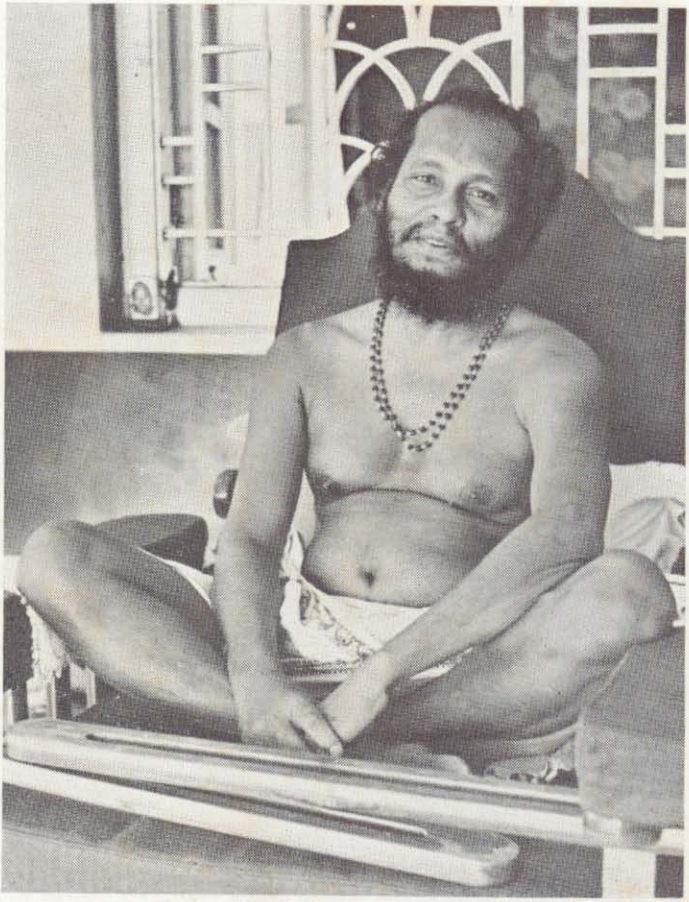

Swami Muktananda

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PREFACE

The universe is made up of the seer and the seen, the perceiver and the perceived. Its processes—creation, sustenance and dissolution—are presided over by Rudra and other deities. All creatures are subject to these same processes. Supreme Shiva, the principle, is everlasting. All gods and all creatures originate in it and merge into it when they dissolve. The universe arises as a throb of that reality and abides in it. It emanates its rays of Shakti in total freedom. These rays are the alphabet from *a* to *ksha*.

The Shiva *tattva* or principle is immortal, the transcendent vibratory principle. The universe, in undifferentiated unity, lives in its very being, though appearing to be different from it. It is conscious and nondual, the source of infinite bliss. It is the highest luminous truth, Shankara, the all-pervasive Self of all.

The first of the *Shivasutras* is *Chaitanyam atma*—the *atman* or Self is consciousness. The Self unfolds its countless powers when it sets out to create a universe, and manifests as the subject (perceiver) and the object (perceived). Though the cosmos contains the two-fold division of seer and seen, still it is a unity since there is not a single object in it which cannot be apprehended by consciousness or illumined by it. An object which is not amenable to knowledge (perception) cannot exist.

The functional aspects of Chiti, the rays of the light of consciousness, are present in all directions, everywhere. The nature of consciousness is to be ready to know, to

know and to make known. The mode of consciousness is to fill all objects, perceptions and activities while remaining free. Only Parashiva, supreme truth, is thus free. It governs all the *tattvas* from earth up to Shiva.

Parashiva is eternal, pervasive, formless. It activates everything. It is the soul of the universe—supremely pure, completely full, the conscious Self. It does not change though it manifests as space, time and form. It is the consciousness within the spirit within the heart, and it is the same as the consciousness without. Right knowledge is the direct awareness of the pervasiveness of consciousness within and without. Such an undifferentiated understanding brings worldly fulfillment and spiritual liberation, perfection, realisation and peace. It lacks only bondage and suffering.

The truth is that to realise the Self is to get what we already have. There is nothing apart from Shiva. There is nothing other than Shiva. Whatever there is is Shiva. To be aware of Parashiva is to be fearless and free in the Self. There is nothing which is not Shiva; there is no place which is not Shiva; there is no time which is not Shiva; there is no state which is not Shiva. Not a single thought-wave can arise separate from Shiva. To be aware of this is to be aware of Shiva. Here, there, wherever you look, whatever you think, is Shiva. The *Shivasutras* are alive with this divine consciousness.

The perfectly nondual awareness of Shiva is available by Guru's grace, by the favour of Nityananda, by the love of Shiva. We must worship, remember and understand Shiva by becoming Shiva. This is the path of Nityananda, the path given by the Guru. It is nothing new, it is not a sect or a cult, not the monopoly of a single

people or a single land. It is the religion of all countries, all religions, all societies, all men.

Shiva teaches that the Self is supreme bliss. The path to Shiva culminates not in the void but in that bliss which transcends the void. Meditation on the Self is the means to this consummation, and Shaktipat makes it possible. The Being that is immanent and transcendent and yet undifferentiated is the highest realisation. Remembering the all-pervasive consciousness seated in the heart, we bow to Shiva—*Om namah Shivaya.*

When you yourself are true, then the Guru, the mantra and Shiva are also true. To be true is to be good; to be true is to be beautiful.

Your own,

Swami Muktananda

INTRODUCTION

Baba Muktananda loves to tell a story in which a disciple asks his Guru for spiritual instruction. The Guru tells him to sit in meditation and not to think of a monkey. The disciple is overjoyed at such an easily fulfilled command, but when he attempts to meditate, of course the monkey inevitably visits him. Baba tells the story with great relish: "The disciple sits down and says to himself, 'Now what was it Guruji told me to do? Ah, yes, don't think of a monkey . . .' "

The point is that any technique of meditation works the same way as the monkey. It ultimately becomes an impediment, even an obsession. "What am I supposed to do?" "Am I doing it right?" "Am I getting anywhere?" "When will IT happen?" A layer of technique stands between the meditator and reality, and this type of meditation tends to degenerate into meditation on the technique itself and into worry. It turns us away from the light, while Siddha meditation involves contact with the light.

Siddha meditation is natural meditation and it is literally without technique. Baba often tells a new visitor to the Ashram to go into the meditation room and just sit. If he is relaxed and open, the force there will work and he will 'glide' into meditation, as Baba puts it. True meditation is like taking a sunbath: you just lie there in the presence of the sun (the Siddha Guru or God). When pressed, Baba will give a mantra and some ele-

mentary instructions to make the meditator feel he is 'doing something' and to relieve his puzzlement and anxiety.

Reality cannot be approached by means of technique since it is radically beyond technique. This lesson sometimes comes hard to the Western mind, steeped as it is in the scientific faith in method and tools. Baba tells the meditator to use the mantra until meditation descends or occurs, and then to let it go. To get to the auditorium in which he is speaking, he will tell his audience, he had to leave the highway. The pole vaulter must throw away his pole to clear the bar.

The commentaries that constitute the first part of this book contain the highest 'technique' that Muktananda teaches. They lead or push the reader into the techniqueless state of Siddha meditation. The technique here is understanding. Understanding begins in the intellect as it turns over the idea, 'I am Shiva'. It ends in meditation. The 'ideas' Baba puts forth are like a kind of depth charge that enters through the mind and seeps into the very being. Siddha meditation is the meditation of Gurukrupa, the grace or subtle influence of a Siddha; and the grace here allows the ideas to become 'felt'—not as thought about the equality of things, but as actual experience of that equality. And it should be understood that Siddha meditation is not confined to formal sitting but is a way of seeing and a way of life. In this book Baba approaches the wordless through words, the idealess through ideas. There is a definite poetic feel in many places, such as in *Pratyabhijnahridayam* 1, a passionate hymn in praise of the Mother, as the words eddy about the experience, trying to point it out. The

next step demands a leap or a surrender into reality, equality and meditation: the world is Shiva and I am Shiva; this is true now and it has always been true.

The last section of the book contains Baba's commentaries on the *Guru Gita*. This is the other side of the coin of Siddha meditation—the Siddha path is composed of equal parts of knowledge (*jnana*) and devotion (*bhakti*). Spirituality is literally moving beyond duality to the One. Pairs of opposites tend to merge as the higher faculties develop. The charm of the meditation of the Siddhas is to watch as Guru and Self, *bhakti*, and *jnana*, spiritual life and worldly life, divine and human, all come together.

II The Commentaries

These commentaries on verses from various Indian scriptures of the Shaivite tradition were produced from time to time, especially during the early part of 1973. Muktananda would write them quickly as he sat on his porch in the Ashram, inspired perhaps by the early morning *Guru Gita* recitation that was going on in the background at that time. His day's production would end at about 7 a.m. as the Ashramites came out of the chanting hall. They would be translated from the Hindi, and they appeared two or three at a time in the Ashram *Newsletters*.

Now, what do we have here? It springs to mind that this is Muktananda's 'philosophy', but nothing could be further from the truth. Philosophy in the West is gene-

rally limited to the mental realm alone, reflecting a chronic split between thought and action. The professional thinker is interested in producing an original and clever intellectual system; he rarely sees any connection between his theories and his life. Thus a socialist may consider himself to be very different from a conservative, or a logical positivist may feel superior to a metaphysician, yet they are likely to share the same lifestyle, the same middle-age paunch, the same frequent one martini too many. This is where Indian philosophy in general and Baba in particular are different and remarkable. Muktananda is utterly practical. He does not like mere intellectual constructions—this book is not his thought but his experience, a description of his actual state of consciousness.

It is true that he discusses such traditional philosophical problems as the nature of knowledge and experience, the creation and dissolution of the universe, the nature of God; but these discussions, good as they are, only serve his main goal—to help the truth seeker to understand who he actually is and to escape from the pain of life limited by the ego. For Baba is a Guru in the time-honoured Indian tradition. And while a Guru might occasionally produce what seems like philosophy, he is not interested in stimulating us in a mental way only, but in producing a change in our whole being leading to the realisation of the inner Self.

His apparently abstract discussions often suggest a new way of seeing or a new line along which spiritual effort or meditation can proceed. For Baba, an idea must relate directly to sadhana (spiritual practice and transformation of consciousness). Most often the metaphysics

and the spiritual teachings are inextricably tied together, as in this passage:

> Parashiva, the supreme Guru, has become the universe. He is food, water and all that nourishes life. He reveals Himself through knowledge, devotion and yoga. The highest effort consists in attaining nondual devotion for Him, in the awareness 'I am Shiva'. (*Shivasutras* 2/2)

III Shiva and Shakti

'Shiva' is used by Baba to mean the supreme Lord who dwells within each person. He is the Unchanging One, the formless absolute. But, as is seen here, He also becomes the entire universe of forms, *while still retaining His unchanging state.* Shakti (literally, power) or Chiti (literally, consciousness) or Kundalini are names for the aspect of Shiva that is active and brings the many into manifestation—in fact, She *is* the many. Baba sometimes uses Chiti to describe this aspect of Shiva, but he will also simply refer to it as Shiva in many places.* As he says, Shakti, or Chiti, is simultaneously different from and the same as Shiva. There is a familiar Hindu

*This is probably confusing to non-Hindus. The Hindus are unconcerned about questions of monotheism and polytheism. They will agree that there is only one God, meanwhile giving names to ten thousand aspects of that one God—which then become ten thousand individual gods. Here Shiva is to be understood as the name of God beyond form. Do not be concerned because the formless God is given a name usually associated with a specific form of God. This is discussed later.

representation of Lord Shiva reclining on His back in yogic *samadhi* while Shakti, depicted as a goddess, dances on His chest, bringing worlds into manifestation. They are always considered to be two aspects of one being. This Shiva-Shakti couplet has filtered down to all levels of Indian culture: man and wife, contemplative and active and so on. Lord Shiva is often represented as a great yogi, covered with sacred ashes, with matted locks and cobras. In Kashmir Shaivism, however, Shiva has a less personal and more technical meaning, and in these writings Baba does not refer to the personalized Shiva, but to Shiva as the supreme Lord, the inner Self. As Baba has written elsewhere:

> Shiva is neither Shaivite nor Vaishnava nor Buddhist.
> He is your Self.
> Shiva is neither Hindu nor Moslem nor Christian.
> He is the Self of all.
> Shiva is inner bliss.
> Shiva is boundless love.
> (*Mukteshwari* II/370)

Philosophically, Baba's thought is monistic; the world is actually one though it appears to be many. Unlike the Vedantic school, however, Baba does not deny the reality of the world in favour of an abstract formless realm. The world of change is the sport of God and is not different from God:

> Goddess Chiti . . . lives in Parashiva and shares His nature fully. She is not at all different from Him. Chiti is that which creates many from one, making

diverse names and forms out of Shiva who is pure consciousness.
(*Pratyabhijnahridayam* 5)

The Parashakti Chiti spreads everywhere in the universe; She is matter in material objects and consciousness in conscious beings. She takes on attributes, yet She is without attributes. It is She who is sporting everywhere. How can anything be different from Her?
(*Svacchandatantra*)

It is not quite correct to say that Baba is a follower of Kashmir Shaivism. The Shaivite scriptures that Baba uses here deal with a vast amount of intellectual and technical material that doesn't interest Baba at all. His merciful and practical eye catches only those ideas that are directly helpful to minute-to-minute, real life sadhana. Baba reponds to these writings because they share his realisation of unity within diversity, the 'Shivaness' of the world that our senses can perceive. This realisation is the master-key to liberation. Obviously, if all the world is really Shiva, then yoga has nothing to do with fleeing to caves to avoid the world:

A true yogi does not have to retire into a cave or a desolate forest. He does not have to force his eyes to remain closed, or suspend his breath to pass into inert *samadhi*.
(*Shivasutras* 1/9)

. . . To that saint, there is nothing different from him which he could renounce; nothing different from him which he could acquire by meditating on it.
(*Shivasutras* 1/7)

Since the very heart of Baba's teaching is that all that there is, all that we see and hear and touch, is God, any dualism which excludes part of experience is in fact excluding part of God. Shiva Himself is the experience and the experiencer.

> Parashiva is the real experiencer of all the states. Bondage is the attitude that 'I am the doer and the enjoyer'. Who but Shiva can hear through the ears? Who but He can think with the mind and speak with the tongue?
> (*Shivasutras* 1/11)

These are extraordinary assertions. The 'I' who uses the senses and the organs of the body is none other than the supreme Lord who has limited Himself for His own sport or amusement. The only thing that prevents Shiva in the form of the individual from recognizing His own true identity is His false identification with His actions, His sense pleasures, and His thoughts. When we eat, Shiva is eating, when we hear, Shiva is hearing. To remain aware of this is the form of worship and meditation that Baba urges upon us.

IV Siddha Meditation and the Mind

When the yogi looks at certain thoughts as bad and others as good, he is dividing Shiva, creating dualism. With the profound understanding of the unity of all things and with the profound faith that our aversions

and attachments and even our moral judgments do not disturb that underlying unity, Baba asks us to meditate:

> Meditate on Parashiva who equally pervades everywhere, within and without . . . Look upon the unceasing flow of images that arise in the mind as nothing but the mind, and you will be free . . . the phantasmagoria of innumerable fancies and thoughts is nothing but the mind. And the mind is throbbing Chiti. By this true insight the mind becomes tranquil. To become perfectly still seeing the whole cosmos as a play of consciousness and submerging yourself in that divine play, to meditate on Shiva by becoming Shiva—this is the awareness of pure Being.
> (*Shivasutras* 1/16)

> The meditator should merge all his senses into the one Self and become completely absorbed in it. He should meditate on Shiva, seeing the same One in all different thoughts and objects, and lose himself in this meditation. Thus he will realise Brahman.
> (*Shivasutras* 2/5)

I have quoted here at length because so much is conveyed in these lines. Baba does not simply assert that all is one. He takes the trouble to show in a very clear way how this metaphysic can be applied. Here he gives the technique that leads to Siddha meditation, and it is so startling that a reader might pass right by it without receiving anything. For Baba, meditation is a matter of correct understanding. It is not concentration or any

other technique of exclusion. The meditator should not think 'this is a good thought and that is a bad thought' or 'this thought is the one I am concentrating on and that one is a break in my concentration and should be expelled'. He should think of all thought as simply thought, and of thought itself as Chiti. Whatever thoughts the mind produces, good or bad, high or low, all that is going on is the play of Chiti. The meditator should sit at ease, not fiercely straining. Baba always talks of the naturalness and spontaneity of meditation—it never involves distortion. Whatever comes up is to be recognised calmly as a form of God. And not only are the thoughts Shiva, but the witnessing meditator is also Shiva, and he should slowly merge into and surrender to the flow of the mind. When the surrender is complete, mind and time stop.

> All his ideas are Shiva, his images are Shiva, his agitation is Shiva and its consequences are also Shiva. . . . This awareness is indeed meditation. Whatever thought pulses in the mind, to see that as a ray of Chiti—this is the most effective meditation technique. (*Ishwarapratyabhijnam* 11/12)

In Baba's comprehensive discussion of the mind in his commentary on *Pratyabhijnahridayam* 5, he says that the mind is the Goddess Chiti Herself, taking on limitation voluntarily in order to enjoy Her play of consciousness. Goddess Chiti becomes the mind (*manas*) when She has Her sport in the outer world of the three *gunas* or qualities; She becomes the ego (*ahankar*) when She becomes aware of Her individuality and separation from other

individuals and things; and She becomes the intellect (*buddhi*) when She exercises judgment. This follows the classical Indian division of the mind. Muktananda's emphasis, however, is not to be found in this analysis, but in the concluding general remark, "Thus Chiti constantly pulsates into countless modifications in countless ways." And, "When She attains the knowledge of Her own essential nature, She is again Goddess Chiti."

The point is that it is all so simple. Generations of brahmin pandits have spent their lives analysing the functions of the *manas, ahankar* and *buddhi.* In the idiom of a story Baba tells, they are in the condition of a man who, finding himself in a mango orchard, wants to know what type of mangoes were grown there, and in pursuing his inquiry neglects to eat even a single one. The teaching Baba has for us is simple: don't become fascinated by the endless multiplication of differences and distinctions when the truth of oneness alone can end your suffering.

> The mind itself is the Lord of the Self. Remain in the awareness that the mind is consciousness and that you are Parashiva. This is the secret of spiritual realisation.
> (*Pratyabhijnahridayam* 5)

So this is not only a technique for sitting meditation, but a basic approach to life. Reflection on 'I am Shiva' and the play of Chiti should continue at all times until it is second nature.

Shivena Shiva sadhana. (Shiva is realised by means of Shiva.) You should discard concepts such as 'world', 'bound soul', and 'evil thoughts' and practise identification with Shiva. Live in the consciousness of your Shivahood, your divinity. You are Shiva's. Become Shiva and nothing but Shiva.
(*Shivasutras* 2/2)

V The Siddha

Yoga and meditation are not a striving for what must be attained, but a realisation of what already is. All is perfect prior to any effort. This sunny and encouraging truth suffuses these writings. In the West we first look for something to 'do', a path of action. Muktananda tells us only to understand—right now! But this is so difficult and so strange. There may seem to be a danger of becoming passive and sterile in this surrender to the flow of Chiti. It is precisely here that Baba adds a special emphasis of his own to the commentaries. Along with the constant emphasis on the vision of unity and the Shivaness of the world and individual, two other themes often recur. It is true that these themes are touched in the *Sutras* themselves, but only briefly, and in his constant return to them, Baba becomes more than a commentator; he is a Guru with his own message to the world. And he has personalised these commentaries with his unmistakable touch.

Sutra 3/13 describes the Siddha ("A Siddha lives in total freedom.") Not only in his commentary on that verse, but again and again even where the verse at hand does not mention it, Baba gives us his portrait of the Siddha, the *jnani,* the *jivanmukta,* the liberated man.

> He is a Siddha who has achieved mastery over his senses and their objects . . . who sees this world, which the ignorant experience as full of sorrow, as the outer sport of Parashakti . . . who has burnt away the imaginary distinctions of virtue and sin, enjoyment and liberation, worldliness and spirituality, in the fire of inner knowledge. He regards all the thoughts that arise within him, whether good or bad, as the stirrings of the Self. He has become the universe, the Lord of the universe and the soul of the universe. He is his own path, and his own destination. He is fully active and yet completely inactive. He is aware: 'I am supreme Shiva'.
> (*Shivasutras* 3/13)

Again:

> He is always in natural *samadhi,* while eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, playing, talking, bathing, enjoying sense-pleasures and meditating. He always lives in spontaneous joy.
> (*Shivasutras* 1/9)

By means of these glimpses of the Siddha's state, Baba is giving us an intimation of our true condition. The yoga here is not based on some technique or means; the most exalted yoga is based on the end (God), not on the

means—for this reason Baba continually holds the model up to our view of the man who has become one with Shiva. In this Baba is not unlike his beloved Jnaneshwar Maharaj, whose commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* is filled with portraits of the enlightened man, as is the *Gita* itself. Such an image of freedom has the power to pull the seeker who contemplates it towards itself.

VI The Guru

The other theme that Baba himself emphasises is related to this: *Gururupayah* (The Guru is the means). Baba never misses a chance to give this teaching which is so dear to his heart.

> Lord Shiva agrees that a disciple's Self-unfolding takes place only by Guru's grace. The Guru destroys the darkness in the hearts of his disciples and fills them with the light of knowledge.
> (*Shivasutras* 2/6)

The Guru is the model, the man who has attained, and also the initiator of the process. By means of Shaktipat (the transmission of grace), he awakens the dormant Kundalini (spiritual power) of his disciples; and leading them through the intricate turns and twists of the spiritual path, he makes them like himself.

Baba tells us that the true Guru is not the physical form of the teacher, but is Lord Shiva, the Self of all, who dwells in the heart of every person. But this truth should not take us away from the fact that the physical

Guru is an absolute necessity in spiritual life. Although divinity lies within him, man cannot realise it without the agency and grace of an actual, living Siddha Guru. On this point there is no equivocation: "It is only when, by the Guru's grace, the great Shakti Kundalini awakes within him that man arises from his sleep." The Guru takes an active role to guarantee that the disciple does not remain with bad habits or in blind alleys. Muktananda himself has served a long apprenticeship at the feet of a Siddha, the great Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri. In other writings Baba is the disciple and the *bhakta*. In these commentaries his *bhakti* merges with pure *jnana* and the two are seen to be one and the same thing. The embodied being must have an embodied being for a Guru. In his commentaries on the *Guru Gita*, which form the last section, Baba gives this a full exposition.

These are the main themes, but there are several interesting subsidiary points that should be mentioned.

VII Mantra

Shivasutras 2/1 and 2/2 should be studied carefully by anyone who practises mantra repetition. Baba takes the concept of mantra to a high level. The mantra is not certain syllables and sounds, it is not even the meanings of these sounds. In fact, the mantra is the mind itself: "The mind of the aspirant who practises mantra is itself the mantra." And, "Mantra refers to the very mind, to its throbbing movement by which a yogi meditates. . . . Mantra is indeed the supreme Shakti who

brings the letters to life; it is the awareness of inner unity." If a mantra is repeated without the awareness of unity it cannot bear full fruit. Baba tells us that the mantra itself, the person who repeats the mantra, and Shiva, the Lord of mantra, are actually one. Here mantra moves beyond the repetition of words to a consciousness which the seeker retains by his effort (2/2). "The consciousness of unity pulsing within a seeker is mantra." Mantra becomes meditation; it moves from a repetition of sounds to a steadily held awareness or feeling of oneness. Here also Baba warns us not to dishonour the mind or try to control it by force. If the mind is itself mantra, then we do not have to tug and yank at it to bring it into line. We must simply be aware of its pulsation, and in this way honour it as Chiti.

VIII The Five Processes

In several commentaries Baba demonstrates that the individual performs on a small scale the same functions that Lord Shiva performs on the cosmic scale. In *Shivasutras* 3/14, ("As here, so elsewhere"), the point is that the whole external universe exists also within. This is a general truth, but in Baba's discussion of *Pratyabhijnahridayam* 10, he shows how this truth can be seen quite concretely by means of an interesting type of meditation. Shaivism holds that Lord Shiva always performs the five processes—creation, sustenance, destruction, concealment and grace. Indeed, this constitutes the universe. But at the same time, the individual performs his own counterpart of these processes. Baba tells us to adopt

the perspective that we are the Shiva of our own subjective world, and witness how that world changes according to the five processes. Baba's explanation is sufficiently clear and detailed, the only point to be made is that by this means the seeker can see in a very simple way, here and now, that the statement, 'I am Shiva' is true. In fact, not only in this case, but in all of Baba's suggestions in these commentaries, he offers a way of glimpsing the truth immediately and not after a long process of spiritual work. The seeker who reflects on 'I am Shiva', immediately contacts the supreme reality, if only for a moment.

* * *

Baba is not a philosopher but a Guru, and his only concern is to coax and cajole the seeker towards enlightenment; the realisation that the *jiva* (individual soul) is really Shiva. His tone is not so much philosophical as it is hortatory and rhapsodic. That is why these commentaries are passionate and not dry. They are supremely compassionate, supremely concerned with our welfare. And they are graced with simplicity. He tells us to think 'I am Shiva' and he wants us to actually feel the oneness behind change.

The book should be read slowly, not as philosophy but as revelation, or as the Hindus would say, *darshan*. To have *darshan* of someone is to see him, to be presented to him. The *darshan* here is of the liberated soul who is Shiva, the Self, the Guru. He is Nityananda and he is Muktananda. It is a glimpse of his consciousness, and if in meditating on these passages there is even the smallest

stirring of an intuition of what the true vision of unity is like, then Baba's purpose is served. It is the grace of the Guru alone that awakens the force of Kundalini that lies dormant in the seeker and can make this unified vision possible and permanent.

The love that generates this book actually demands of the reader's mind that it awaken to a higher state—to read it is to experience the Self. The grace of Muktananda charges these words with true meditation.

Swami Shankarananda

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The texts upon which Baba comments in this section all belong to the tradition of Advaita (nondualistic) Shaivism of Kashmir (North India). The *Shivasutras,* which form by far the largest part of the commentary, lay the foundation of this tradition. It is recorded that one night the sage Vasuguptacharya had a dream in which Lord Shiva revealed to him that certain teachings were inscribed face down on a rock nearby. If he went to the rock it would turn over of its own accord and reveal the inscription. Accordingly, the next day he found what is now known as the *Shivasutras,* given by Shiva out of compassion for a world in spiritual bankruptcy.* This took place in Kashmir, near Srinagar, at the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century A.D. Baba himself visited the rock during his visit to Kashmir in November, 1973.

Next to the *Shivasutras,* Baba has paid the most attention to the *Pratyabhijnahridayam,* by Kshemaraja, an 11th century member of the line of Gurus and disciples begun by Vasuguptacharya. This work exists in an English translation (translated and edited by Jaideva Singh, Delhi, 1963).

The other texts used as Baba's sources are also in the tradition begun by the *Shivasutras* and Vasugupta's

*As Baba says, "Parashiva, the supreme Guru, is the deadly enemy of duality and differentiation. He is the originator of the nondual school."
(*Shivasutras* 2/2)

teachings based on them. *Spandakarika* was written by Kallata, Vasugupta's disciple and the chief promulgator of his teachings. It dates from about the second half of the 9th century. The *Ishwarapratyabhijna Sutras* are by Utpala, a pupil of Somananda, who, like Kallata, was a famous disciple of Vasugupta. The *sutras* are dated about the first half of the 10th century.

Baba also quotes in one or two places from the *Vijnana Bhairava Tantra* and the *Svacchandatantra,* both of which were the subject of commentaries by writers of the school of Kashmir Shaivism.

These treatises are in verses that often sound cryptic to modern ears ("Yogic realisations are marvelous," "Knowledge is food," "The power of will is the maiden Uma"). The Guru might ask his students to meditate on them or he might lecture and expand on them himself. Often a commentary has come down with the text itself. Baba's approach is therefore quite traditional, and he has clearly found these *sutras* convenient to his purposes as a Guru.

THE COMMENTARIES

चैतन्यमात्मा (शिवसूत्र १/१)
Chaitanyamatma. (*Shivasutras* 1/1)
The *atman* is consciousness.

The *atman* is that which reveals itself and everything in the universe. It is supremely free in all its perceptions and actions and its very inner essence is consciousness.

In all places, things and times the *atman* is ever the same. Everywhere, by means of consciousness alone, He sees, hears, grasps, walks, gives and takes. He lives in all and is yet different from all. He is with everyone and yet the friend of no one. He lives in highest freedom and endows everything with consciousness. He is consciousness itself. Though without form Himself, He becomes each form at the appropriate moment. He does everything without tools or instruments—holds without hands, walks without feet, sees without eyes, speaks without tongue and hears without ears. Neither man nor woman, He assumes their forms to function in the world. He is pure consciousness.

The nature of consciousness is to expand. For this reason the universe has been called an outer expansion of consciousness. When a fire is blazing a lot of sparks leap up of their own accord and then fall back into the fire. In the same way, countless universes arise and subside in the *atman* by themselves. Amid the appearance

and disappearance of universes, the *atman* remains utterly tranquil and immutable. He is the highest bliss, the indweller. He is consciousness. He is the outer limit of attributelessness. He transcends even the formless.

He is the basis of everything that exists and also of everything that does not exist. It is His intrinsic nature to create, to become and to grow, to reveal Himself and everything else. Though continually in the process of becoming, He does not lose His integrity. He is pure consciousness.

ज्ञानं बन्धः (शिवसूत्र १/२)
Jnanam bandhah. (*Shivasutras* 1/2)
Knowledge is bondage.

Amazing as it is, this aphorism is completely true. Our inner states—contraction or expansion, joy or sorrow, anxiety or ignorance—are all reactions to their respective stimuli. Knowledge of the external world is the root of all sorrow when it seeps inside and is identified with. When I was a child I would stroll in a street where some boys who knew English would abuse me in that language. Since I didn't understand what they said, I would only laugh and go back. Then one day a person who spoke English explained that I was being abused by them. As soon as I heard that I was miserable.

Outer knowledge causes bondage in exactly the same way. This is what Mahadev (Lord Shiva) says here. When we identify ourselves with the body and the status and titles that belong to it, pride of family, caste and individuality eclipse our inner nature, and there is bond-

age. Our concepts of sin and virtue and our identification with the gross or subtle body alienate us from our true Self. To go about life without interest in the Self and to mistake ignorance for knowledge is bondage and the cause of all misery.

When the inner Shakti is awakened by the Guru's grace, knowledge of the Self arises from within. The Self stands revealed. And when the Self and Brahman are seen to be the same thing, one lives in supreme freedom and revels in his own play. He becomes firmly anchored in true bliss. Knowing the inner Self he is filled with the Guru's bliss.

उद्यमो भैरवः (शिवसूत्र १/५)
Udyamo bhairavah. (*Shivasutras* 1/5)
Effort is itself Bhairava.

Right effort is this: on attaining knowledge of the nature of the highest reality, one strives to remain constantly immersed in the awareness of the inner Self.

When Guru's grace is received, the inner Shakti is unfolded. As a result of the transmission of Shakti, the power of consciousness, meditation comes spontaneously, and innumerable *kriyas,* including *asanas, mudras* and different kinds of *pranayama* take place. The seeker turns within. Awareness of the inner Self begins to throb all the time within him. To stay in this awareness is the right effort for the seeker.

Separative knowledge relying on words only produces dualities such as love and hate, and joy and sorrow. But the undifferentiated awareness of one's true nature, which is the same as Bhairava (Shiva), releases pure

bliss. To remain aware of the inner Self is right effort. To understand that all thoughts that spring from within and take verbal form are nothing but the pulsation of Parashakti, anchors one firmly in the Self.

When one who constantly dives into his inner being is blessed by the Guru, he is blessed with a complete inner unfolding. This is known as the Shambhava way:

अकिंचित् चिन्तकस्यैव गुरुणा प्रतिबोधतः।
जायते यः समावेशः शाम्भवोऽसावुदीरितः॥ (मालिनिविजयः २/२३)

Akinchitchintakasyaiva guruna pratibodhatah jayate yah samavesha shambhavo'savudiritah. (Malini)

An aspirant, even if he hasn't done any sadhana before meeting his Guru, or explored the spiritual world, if he has faith, he experiences unity with the supreme Lord when he is initiated by the Guru. The greater the maturity of a disciple, the higher his worth and sincerity, the quicker his progress towards merging in Shambhava (Shiva). To achieve awareness of one's perfection through the Shambhava technique—that alone is right effort. And right effort is itself Bhairava, the highest God.

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तभेदे तुर्याभोगसंभवः (शिवसूत्र १/७)

Jagratsvapnasushuptabhede turyabhogasambhavah. (*Shivasutras* 1/7)

It is possible to enjoy the bliss of *turiya* (the fourth or transcendental state) in the different states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

This is a significant aphorism, and worth contemplating. It hints at the high state of the *jnani,* the fully en-

lightened being. Most people think that a *jnani* or a saint is someone who lives in silence in a cave, his eyes closed, his breath and other functions suspended for long periods, lost in *samadhi.* But to a real *jnani,* such a yogi is only a child. Having come to know the true nature of reality through his Guru's grace, a *jnani* has ceased to differentiate the waking, dream, deep sleep and *turiya* states from one another. To him each of them is equally full of the same supreme bliss. A *jnani* would not condemn the waking state when in it, nor would he avoid participation in its drama. Neither does he find anything wrong with the dream or deep sleep states.

A *jnani's* attention is not on the passing states, but on the witness-Self, who, while living in those states, remains different from them, forever beyond their reach. The Self is detached, watching the waking state from a distance. Coming into contact with the senses and their objects, It remains separate from them. And even when It acts in the waking state, It does not identify with it, remaining Its witness. While dreaming, when the body is asleep, It does not become identified with that state, but sees the dream world as distinct from Itself. Though It gets into the dream state, It remains as a witness to all its happenings. The third state is that of deep unconscious sleep. Even in this state, It remains detached, watching it. That witness-Self is experienced in *turiya.*

In *turiya* one drinks the highest bliss. But a real *jnani* or yogi drinks the ecstasy of *samadhi,* the bliss of manifestation, even in the waking state, seeing the entire waking world as an expansion of the same Chiti. He knows from direct experience that in all the states, one arising from the other, one merging into the other, the witness-Self always remains undifferentiated, pure and

unaffected, unchanged, without rising or setting. Such a *jnani,* who is perfect in meditation, who has been blessed by his Guru, continually enjoys the same bliss of *turiya,* without the least change, in all the states—waking, dream and deep sleep. Of course he is full of peace while he is meditating, but even while immersed in the affairs of the waking world, he is free of anxiety, always reveling in the bliss that surges from within. To that saint, there is nothing different from him which he could renounce, nothing different from him which he could acquire by meditating on it.

The bliss which is the same and unchanged in all the states is the bliss of *turiya.* To an actor all the scenes in a play are equally his creation and his joyful sport—and whether they provoke tears or laughter, they mean the same to him. In the same way, the three states—waking, dream and deep sleep—are simply different phases of the same supreme state of *turiya.* The bliss of *turiya* can be enjoyed in all its purity in all the states.

ज्ञानं जाग्रत् (शिवसूत्र १/८)
Jnanam jagrat. (*Shivasutras* 1/8)
Knowledge is wakefulness.

The normal waking state is not true wakefulness. According to enlightened saints, the state of waking, being coupled with ignorance, is darkness. The poet-saints of India exhort, "O man, why are you asleep in the arms of ignorance? Wake up. Awake!" The *Upanishads* also cry, "Arise! Awake! Don't sleep!" Forgetfulness of one's true nature is ignorance, and that is a night of terrible darkness.

If a man's Kundalini is asleep, he is wrapped in folds of night; he is not truly awake, not awake to the Self. He may be very effective in his practical life, but, even moving in his everyday world, he remains asleep. It is only when, by the Guru's grace, the great Shakti Kundalini awakes within him that man arises from his sleep. A sleeping man is not aware of the gorgeous kingdom of Chiti within his own heart, nor of the true nature of the external world.

The awakening of Kundalini is the dawn of knowledge. As soon as one receives the Guru's grace, the sleep of ignorance runs away. The inner eye of knowledge is opened. While sitting with his mind focused on his heart, one can know the inner and outer worlds with great clarity. He sees the Blue God in *sahasrar* sparkling with the effulgence of a million suns. This is the light of inner knowledge and it dispels the darkness of his ignorance and reveals the entire inner universe, fully illuminating the mind.

Not only this. Just as a drop of rain, by merging with a river becomes the river, and a river, by flowing into the ocean becomes the ocean itself, the embodied soul, by merging with Parashiva, becomes Parashiva Himself. The man whose eye of knowledge is opened becomes transmuted into pure consciousness. In the blue spaces of consciousness, Chiti sports and revels in Her fullness. Man begins to shine like a diamond by Her light.

The only one who is truly awake is the one who has evolved from the state of limitation to the state of freedom, who has moved away from ignorance to full knowledge and who has exploded the false distinction between matter and consciousness. Waves of bliss of unity-awareness ripple through him. For him there is neither

one nor two nor many; neither matter nor consciousness; neither beginning nor end nor middle; neither *jiva* nor Shiva; neither gods nor goddesses. He melts the ice of name and form in the ocean of consciousness, himself becoming pure consciousness. He transcends both making and becoming. He is pure Shiva, the purest Being. This is the awakening to knowledge received by the Guru's grace. It is the state of enlightenment. It is the transcendental, the highest Shiva. It is Guru Nityananda.

त्रितयभोक्ता वीरेशः (शिवसूत्र १/११)
Tritayabhokta vireshah. (*Shivasutras* 1/11)
The supreme Lord, Shiva, is the experiencer of the three states.

The yogi who is one with universal consciousness is centred in the supreme state of Shiva. He experiences himself as the witness of the three states and their corresponding worlds.

The Self is the witness of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is as a witness that He enjoys these states, without undergoing any change. He is indeed Shiva, the supreme Lord. In the waking state He functions in the gross body and experiences gross objects with the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five forms of prana and the fourfold psychic instrument. In dreams He experiences the subtle objects of that state. And in deep sleep, He experiences joyful and dreamless oblivion. That Self is none other than Parashiva.

Parashiva is the real experiencer of all the states. It is a delusion to believe that you are the enjoyer. As He says in the *Gita,* the Lord enjoys and digests the four

kinds of food by becoming the gastric fire (*vaishvanara*). In the same way He enjoys the three states without changing. Bondage is the attitude that 'I am the doer and the enjoyer'. Who but Shiva can hear through the ears? Who but He can think with the mind and speak with the tongue?

सर्वेन्द्रिय गुणाभासं (गीता)

Sarvendriya gunabhasam. (*Gita*)

He is the perceiver of all sense objects.

Who but Shiva can perceive sense objects? The One who experiences the external waking world, the internal world of dreams and the total oblivion of deep sleep is the supreme Master who is revealed in *turiya*. By remaining constantly aware of the witness of the three states and their phenomena, a seeker finds the place of *turiya* and even beyond right within himself.

Seer and seen are aspects of the same consciousness. The true relationship of the senses and their objects has been described by a poet who says that the senses perceive, delight in and act on their respective objects. Shiva is the experience, and Shiva is the experienced. Understanding this establishes the seeker in unity-awareness. One who plunges into the inner Self with this knowledge and with a still mind becomes God.

विस्मयो योगभूमिका (शिवसूत्र १/१२)

Vismayo yogabhumika. (*Shivasutras* 1/12)

Yogic realisations are amazing.

You naturally feel surprised by unusual things in ordinary life, but nothing in the outer world can compare

with yogic realisations. The yogi is filled with amazement as the Guru's grace unfolds itself. When he receives grace his inner Shakti is awakened and he has marvelous experiences. Countless physical and subtle *kriyas* take place within him spontaneously. Sitting still he sees distant objects and different worlds. He travels from world to world. He roams in the white and blue and gold of the effulgent inner spaces. He envisions the heart seed. He moves in the *sahasrar* and sees its radiant sphere. Every day there are new wonders that fill him with amazement and great rapture. So does his sadhana progress.

He continually explores his own nature, experiencing new *kriyas*. And when he experiences the bliss of the Self he is surprised, amazed and completely stilled.

By means of the Guru's grace the yogi has visions of all the gods and goddesses and the various Shaktis. He becomes aware of his unity with the universe and sees the entire cosmos within himself. Immersed in the inner blue light, he becomes one with pure consciousness. He repeatedly sees himself in all, and all in himself. He is submerged in the blissful ocean of supreme amazement.

इच्छा शक्तिरुमा कुमारी (शिवसूत्र १/१३)
Iccha shaktiruma kumari. (*Shivasutras* 1/13)
The power of will is the maiden Uma.

God, called the Purusha in the ancient *Upanishads,* is the final goal of all philosophical systems. In His being a vibration arises spontaneously—it is His power of will and it is in no way different from Him. In the word *kumari,* the syllable *ku* is *maya,* the power which gives

rise to the consciousness of differences. *Mari* is that which destroys. *Umakumari* is the maiden who dissolves the consciousness of differences.

The maiden, this power of will, creates the universe in Her own being in supreme freedom. She creates this richly diverse universe of dualities and contradictions: it is different from Her and yet not different. Though She Herself becomes the universe, She ever remains exactly what She has always been: a maiden, supple and youthful.

Her power begins to move in the central nerve, *sushumna,* of a seeker who has received the grace of the Guru. She carries out different functions in his inner bodies, purifying every single part of his being according to need by means of yogic *kriyas.* In the end She unites with Parashiva in the *sahasrar* and manifests Herself fully. It is then that the yogi attains the highest freedom.

A Siddha is he who, merging with the divine will, has become utterly free and lives and moves everywhere without the least hindrance. For such a Master of yoga, capable of entering any realm with total ease and freedom, there is nothing that is not his own Self. His will is also the maiden Uma. It is verily She who is the universe.

शुद्धतत्त्वसंधानाद्वाऽपशुशक्ति (शिवसूत्र १/१६)

Shuddhatattva sandhanadva'pashushakti.

(*Shivasutras* 1/16)

By the awareness of pure Being, divine power is attained.

Parashiva, the primal Lord, the supreme Guru of all Siddhas, is Himself perfect, pure Being. To worship Him and to be aware of Him as He is, is to have the awareness of pure Being. By this practice a seeker rids himself of the fetters which bind him.

Sant Jnaneshwar says in his *Jnaneshwari* that only a truly wise man can see a pot as clay without having to break it to pieces in order to reduce it to clay. In the same way, awareness of the Self should be achieved without discarding the universe or running away from it. This is the awareness of pure Being and by its means one easily becomes the Master, the Lord.

One who wishes to meditate on pure Being should meditate on Parashiva who equally pervades everywhere, within and without. Let him meditate on the external universe considering every bit of it—animate and inanimate—to be pure consciousness. Not only the supremely effulgent consciousness within his heart, but also his senses and his body are the same Chiti. Regarding it this way, with a mind free from thought, he merges into supreme light.

Here Shiva asks the aspirant to meditate with a silent mind. If he could look upon the unceasing flow of images that arise in his mind as nothing but the mind, he would be free. In the same way that the universe made of consciousness is consciousness, and pots made from clay are clay, and ornaments beaten out of gold are still gold, and cloth woven from yarn is yarn, so that phantasmagoria of innumerable thoughts and fancies is nothing but the mind. And the mind is throbbing Chiti. By this true insight the mind becomes tranquil. To become perfectly still, seeing the whole cosmos as a play of

consciousness and submerging oneself in that divine play, to meditate on Shiva by becoming Shiva—this is the awareness of pure Being. Through it perfect power is gained.

वितर्क आत्मज्ञानम् (शिवसूत्र १/१७)
Vitarka atmajnanam. (*Shivasutras* 1/17)
Vitarka is knowledge of the Self.

'I am the same Parashiva who becomes the universe and dwells in its heart'—when this thought, uninterrupted by doubt, vibrates within, one has attained *vitarka,* knowledge of the inner Self.

After the compassionate Guru has transmitted Shakti, yogic *kriyas* occur by themselves, and day by day impurities are washed away. As the heart becomes clean, pure knowledge wells up and the seeker becomes constantly possessed by the awareness of the inner Self and the experience of the supreme Shakti. By regular, daily meditation, the process is aided and subtle inner *kriyas* remove all taints from the heart. This happens easily when there is unwavering love for the Guru. The primal Lord, the primal Guru, calls that knowledge *vitarka* when the essential unity of the world's apparently diverse forms is perceived. The body, the prana, and the senses may appear distinct from one another, but they are one with consciousness.

God is in the universe as both *krama* and *akrama*: one should remain firm in this awareness. *Krama* is God as the graded, systematic universe in form. *Akrama* is God pervading everything, everywhere, equally, without

undergoing any change. Parashiva, the supreme Lord, has Himself assumed countless forms and diversities in a graded succession (*krama*). At the same time He preserves His non-hierarchical, non-successive (*akrama*) character. In His essential nature He remains ever the same, in primal omniscience and omnipotence, completely, eternally perfect. To have perfection of understanding is *vitarka*. It is this consciousness: 'I am the same Parashiva who is the One, the Self of all'.

लोकानन्दः समाधिसुखम् (शिवसूत्र १/१८)
Lokanandah samadhisukham. (*Shivasutras* 1/18)
The bliss of *loka* is the bliss of *samadhi.*

Loka includes both subject and object, both the seer and the seen—conscious perceptors and the objects of perception, perceived by the outer and inner senses. Conscious of the relationship in time between the knower and the known, a yogi, by the yoga of knowledge, comes to realise that the seer is the seen and the seen is the seer. Normally when two people are looking at each other, each appears as the object of perception to the other. But to the *jnani,* the subject appears as the object. Such awareness allows him to rest in the realisation of pure knowledge, 'I am Shiva'. He is in bliss. This is the highest *samadhi,* the perfect state of enlightenment. The yogi who looks upon the universe as his own body, drinks the nectar of ecstasy. He sees the vast variety of objects, shapes and forms, the endless modifications around him, as diverse and yet one; for they all appear in his own Self trembling with its bliss. To him all the

worlds are vibrations of the one Being, expansions of the one consciousness. This is the bliss of *loka* and the ecstasy of *samadhi.*

Such a one does not have to retire to a cave or a desolate forest. He does not have to force his eyes to remain closed or suspend his breath to pass into inert *samadhi.* He is always in natural *samadhi,* while eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, playing, talking, bathing, enjoying sense-pleasures and meditating. He always lives in spontaneous joy. This is the bliss of *loka,* the ecstasy of *samadhi.*

शुद्धविद्योदयाच्चक्रेशत्वसिद्धिः (शिवसूत्र १/२१)
Shuddhavidyodayachakreshatvasiddhih.
(*Shivasutras* 1/21)
When pure knowledge arises, Lordship over all cosmic powers is attained.

Knowledge can be pure or impure. If you think, 'I am a sinner', 'I am a bound creature', 'This is my caste', if you suffer from a poverty of Shakti, if you are obsessed with others' faults and evil in the world, to the degree that you take on those tendencies, you are under the influence of impure knowledge.

Pure knowledge arises when the Guru's blessing sets you on the path of Siddha Yoga. The grace of the Guru purifies the inner being through inner *kriyas*; inner lights—lights within light—are seen. The inner Self is revealed, followed by the awareness, 'I am He'. The fruit of this awareness, constantly and effortlessly held, we call pure knowledge. Then one identifies oneself with the whole cosmos, feeling, 'I am indeed everything.

I alone pervade everywhere, within and without'. This is the highest state.

The man of pure knowledge understands that in his essential nature Shakti is operating of Her own free will and that he himself is Parashiva. He discards the illusion, 'I am not Shiva'. In this state, transcending the mind, his true nature stands fully revealed.

Shivahood or the divine state is perfect awareness of the inner Self and the realisation that you yourself are Shiva, the supreme cause of everything, in His fullness. A Siddha is one who is established in this state. He is beyond phenomena, anchored securely in his transcendent aspect. Birth, death, poverty and sorrow cannot touch him. He has achieved unity with that Parashiva who abides in the boundless spaces within his *sahasrar.*

महाह्रदानुसंधानान्मन्त्रवीर्यानुभवः (शिवसूत्र १/२२)

Mahahridanusandhanan mantra viryanubhavah.

(*Shivasutras* 1/22)

By awareness of the Great Ocean, the potency of mantra is realised.

Parashakti is universal consciousness. By the power of Her sovereign will, She manifests all the gross sense objects from Her own being. Going deep within, a seeker sees that this is true. Favoured by the Guru's grace, he also gains direct knowledge of certain dynamic forces called *khechari, gochari, dikshari* and *bhuchari. Khechari* moves through the sky of consciousness, *gochari* through the fourfold inner psychic instrument. *Dikshari* moves in different directions through the sense

organs, and *bhuchari* is the power which moves on the earth, creating different objects.

Parashakti remains absolutely pure and detached even while She reflects the whole universe in Herself as a mirror reflects an image. Though She is manifest all around, Her mystery remains difficult to comprehend.

She is also called the Great Ocean of unfathomable depths. Just as the ocean remains calm even while holding rocks, mountains and trees in its depths, so is consciousness unmoved holding the cosmos within Her. He who carries on his spiritual practice with this awareness experiences the potency of mantra. When Parashakti is directly experienced, when as a result the heart is filled with perfect bliss—that is the realisation of the power of mantra.

चित्तं मन्त्रः (शिवसूत्र २/१)
Chittam mantrah. (*Shivasutras* 2/1)
The mind is mantra.

This is a key aphorism; it contains the secret of right understanding that can liberate an aspirant. Many religions—Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity—stress their own versions of the practice of mantra. Though there is much reverence for mantras and faith in them, we find that nothing much is gained by their practice. We remain in misery because we are ignorant of the true potency of mantra, and the mantra deity is not manifested.

In this aphorism Parashiva gives us the secret of mantra. The mind of the aspirant who practises mantra is

itself the mantra. By means of the mind we become aware of the supreme truth. With the mind we repeat mantras, we contemplate their meaning, we come to know their essence and their goal. The mind is the instrument by which we detect the inner world. The mind must therefore not be undervalued or abused; by its power the Lord's grace is secured.

When we hear, for example, the two Sanskrit syllables, *ra* and *ma,* our minds relate it to an individual or else to God. And it is with our intellects that we understand the meaning of syllables like *Om.* The scriptures say:

ॐ इत्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म। ॐ जगत्। ॐ सर्वम्।

Om ityekaksharam brahma. Om jagat. Om sarva.

Brahman is in the form of one syllable, *Om. Om* is the universe. *Om* is all. When *Om* arises, the universe arises. *Om* is the creative symbol of all elements or principles.

Mantra should be contemplated within. Mantra is the undifferentiated, integral awareness of the nature of the Divine; it should not be regarded as separate from God. Being one with God it is full of bliss. It arises by itself. When mantra vibrates in God's mind, a universe springs into existence. The whole cosmos emanates from the mind which itself is mantra. Mantra is the protector of its practiser, the supreme means, the highest deity. The man who attains oneness with mantra by remaining in unity-consciousness, annihilates the world of dualities.

मननात् त्रायते इति मन्त्रः।

Mananat trayate iti mantrah.

Mantra is that which protects and redeems one who contemplates it.

One who constantly repeats a mantra with correct understanding is raised by its power to divinity. This is the purpose of mantra. Mantra transforms its practitioner into what Lord Krishna calls *madrupa,* 'My form'.

It is important to see that we are not primarily concerned with the component syllables of a mantra or its deity in the usual sense. Mantra refers to the very mind, particularly to the throbbing movement of the mind by which a yogi meditates. Syllables uttered aloud do not constitute a mantra. Indeed, mantra is the great Shakti who brings the syllables to life; it is the awareness of inner unity.

The mantra loses its power if the mantra, the repeater and the supreme Lord, who is the goal of the mantra, are kept in three separate compartments. It will never bring realisation that way. The distinction between word and object is imaginary. If a seeker distinguishes between the worshipper and the worshipped, the devotee and the Lord, he can never achieve realisation:

पृथङ्मन्त्रः पृथङ्मन्त्री न सिद्धयति कदाचन।

Pruthak mantrah pruthak mantri na siddhayanti kadachana. The trinity of the mantra, the mantra deity and the mantra repeater form an indistinguishable unity. This is the truth. They appear to be different only to an intellect caught in dualities. The three are of the same infinite, all-pervading and perfect Chiti that is the ground and primal source of all. This is the awareness that should accompany mantra repetition.

Parashiva is the cause of the universe; from Him alone the entire gross and subtle cosmos comes. His Shakti, Chiti, creates the world for Her sport, holds it in Her

own being, and gathers it up into Herself. Thus deities, mantras, rules and rituals, time and space are all nothing but universal consciousness. The consciousness of unity pulsing within a seeker is mantra. The mantra practiser is Shiva, the mantra *namah Shivaya* is Shiva, and the Lord of the mantra—its goal—is Shiva. The secret of the realisation of a mantra lies in repeating it, having identified oneself completely with Shiva. Lord Shiva says:

आत्मनो भैरवं रूपं भावयेद्यस्तु पूरुषः।
तस्य मन्त्राः प्रसिध्यन्ति नित्ययुक्तस्य सुन्दरि॥ (स्वच्छन्द १/१३७)

Atmano bhairavam rupam bhavayet yastu purushah
tasya mantrah prasiddhyanti nitya yuktasya sundari.
(*Svacchanda* 1/137)

O Goddess, only he who knows Parashiva within, who identifies himself with Him, and who is ever united with Him, receives the fruit of mantra.

The universe is the unfolding of the Self and it is at all times one with the Self. This is the awareness of one's perfection, the experience of one's pervasiveness. Profound absorption in the 'I am perfect' awareness is the highest knowledge. Pursuit of this state is sadhana; meditation, mantra repetition and service to the Guru are all meant to attain it. Therefore, let the aspirant who is striving to remain immersed in integral awareness with a pure heart not differentiate between the mantra, the Lord and himself. The consciousness of the perfect identity of these three is the most exalted destination of a seeker. It is also the best path to perfection. This can be understood only when the Guru grants the inner eye of knowledge.

प्रयत्नः साधकः (शिवसूत्र २/२)
Prayatnah sadhakah. (*Shivasutras* 2/2)
A seeker is one who makes an effort.

This is the second aphorism in the second section of the *Shivasutras.* In the preceding *sutra,* the mind was equated with mantra in order to demonstrate the nature, power and qualities of mantra. The present aphorism is important for one who is constantly contemplating his mantra. That which joins God and aspirant into an inviolable unity is here called effort. The seeker who had been wandering in a state of bondage caused by poverty of Shakti, quickly becomes anchored in his true nature upon receiving the Guru's grace, like an arrow instantly hitting its target. Right effort, in response to the Guru's bidding, is directed towards God, the awareness of the vibrating Chiti which is supreme mantra. Effort here does not have its usual meaning of repeating particular mantras in a particular manner in a particular place, using the teeth, lips, tongue and vocal cords in a particular way to produce a particular sound. Right effort is quite a different thing; it involves the complete identification of the meditating seeker and the object of meditation.

Lord Shiva says: only he receives the fruit of mantra who is constantly making right effort. A mantra comes to life, or awakes, by a seeker's effort. The right effort is to make the Divine Being—who manifests as inner lights and inner *kriyas*—the aim of mantra repetition. A mantra has come alive when, by the Guru's grace, Kundalini is activated. The seeker becomes constantly aware of the oneness of the mantra, its practiser (him-

self) and his deity, all the time—in meditation, in his worldly dealings and in all his sense activities. *Prana* and *apana* become the component syllables of his mantra when the mantra received from the Guru is combined with *prana* and *apana* and repeated with unity-awareness. This is the effort a seeker makes.

Parashiva, the supreme Guru, is the deadly enemy of duality and differentiation. He is the originator of the nondual school. Being the great expounder of nonduality, He has become the universe. He is food, water and all that nourishes life. He reveals Himself through knowledge, devotion and yoga. The highest effort consists in attaining nondual devotion for Him, in the awareness, 'I am Shiva'.

Shivena Shiva sadhana. Shiva is realised by means of Shiva. Therefore, you should discard concepts such as 'world', 'bound soul', and 'evil thoughts', and practise identification with Shiva. Live in the consciousness of your Shivahood, your divinity. You are Shiva's. Become Shiva and nothing but Shiva.

विद्यासमुत्थाने स्वाभाविके खेचरी शिवावस्था (शिवसूत्र २/५)
Vidyasamutthane svabhavike khechari Shivavastha.
(*Shivasutras* 2/5)

When pure knowledge arises, the *khechari* state, the state of Shiva, is easily attained.

Pure, higher knowledge arises in a seeker blessed by the grace of the Guru, and he is filled with discrimination and right understanding. He loses all interest in trivial *siddhis,* and is lost in his natural state, bliss-consciousness. He becomes permanently established in

the sky of pure awareness where there is only bliss. This is *khechari. Khe* is the sky of pure awareness, the space of consciousness. *Chari* is that which moves, delights or soars in that sky. So *khechari* is the state of Shiva, that state in which one hears the melodies of the space of consciousness and enjoys the bliss that bubbles up from within.

On receiving grace, a seeker should sit firmly in a meditative posture. He should focus his mind on his navel, heart, *ajna chakra* or *sahasrar.* He should merge all his senses into the one Self and become completely absorbed in it. He should meditate on Shiva, seeing the same One in all different thoughts and objects, and lose himself in this meditation. Thus he will realise Brahman.

In meditation the world of illusory differences, the arena of all our sorrow and peacelessness, is dissolved in unity-consciousness. The universe is assimilated into the Self in blissful union, and the power of mantra or *mudra* is realised. When the mantra which is Chiti or the great consciousness becomes pleased with a yogi, it imparts all its potency to him. As long as the power of mantra is not manifested it is a barren mantra. When the inner Shakti awakes, Kriya Yoga begins to work and one passes into meditation; the awareness, 'I am Shiva' dawns. As this awareness becomes constant, the power of mantra is fully gained. It flows from identification with Shiva.

Mudra or *khechari mudra* refers to the highest state, the state of Bhairava or Shiva. The everlasting peace of Shiva comes to that seeker who enters the *khechari* state and is awakened by the Guru's knowledge. He is a maha-yogi. Forever dwelling in the sky of consciousness, he is called Parashiva.

गुरुरुपायः (शिवसूत्र २/६)
Gururupayah. (*Shivasutras* 2/6)
The Guru is the means.

For Self-realization, the Guru is the most effective means. Lord Shiva also agrees that a disciple's Self-unfolding takes place only by Guru's grace. The Guru destroys the darkness in the hearts of his disciples and fills them with the light of knowledge.

The Guru should not be confused with a particular physical form. Nor does a flair for scholarship or literary talent make one a Guru. The Guru is one in whom the divine power of grace has taken permanent abode.

Even an ordinary teacher can impart a mantra, prescribe some tantric technique or explain the scriptures. He alone is the supreme Guru who dispenses grace and enters his disciples as grace, blessing them with Shaktipat. He turns them into Gurus like himself. He reveals the potency of mantra. Such a Guru is himself Shiva. It is by the power of mantra that the Kundalini wakes, inner yoga is initiated, and the highest truth, the supreme Lord, is directly experienced. Such a Guru, the most effective of means for his disciples, is truly hard to find.

शरीरं हविः (शिवसूत्र २/८)
Shariram havih. (*Shivasutras* 2/8)
The body is the offering.

Many modes of worship by sacrifice have been prevalent in the world since the time of the *Vedas.* In all these

certain materials are used. The performer or the sacrificer makes offering to the fire while reciting mantras. Here Lord Shiva says that a yogi does not perform such sacrifices. A yogi obtains Maha Yoga by Guru's grace and offers his own body to the divine fire of Kundalini to have it purged. He offers his individuality to the fire of knowledge. And then the fire of yoga blazes within him. Such a Lord of yoga offers the entire cosmos to the fire of consciousness through knowledge. By Guru's grace, his Shakti is activated and Maha Yoga begins its work within him. His body is purged in the fire of yoga, his eye of knowledge opens and he sees the true nature of the universe. The diversities of the world are consumed in the fire of knowledge, of the Self, and all that remains is the pure sport of consciousness.

Such a yogi is not bound by what are considered to be chains. Sin, sorrow and agitation do not grieve him. He does not feel hostile to enemies nor attached to friends. A yogi who has burnt away his body in the fire of consciousness, wherever he may be, in heaven or in our mortal world, considers everything to be nothing but consciousness. He submits all distinctions, sin and sorrow to the fire of yoga and becomes one with Shiva.

शिवोऽस्मि साधनाविष्टः

Shivo'smi sadhanavishtah. 'I am Shiva'—with this thought he surrenders himself to sadhana.

शिवो भोक्ता शिवो भोज्य शिवो कर्त्ता शिवः कर्मः शिवोकरणात्मकः।

Shivo bhokta, Shivo bhojya, Shivo karta, Shivah karmah, Shivah karanatmakah.

Identification with Shiva is his sadhana. To him, Shiva is the experiencer and the object of experience. Shiva is the goal of sadhana. Shiva is the sacrifice and

the materials used in the sacrifice. Shiva is the sacrificer and the ritual as well. Shiva is all the sense organs and the mind. He surrenders his world with all its dualities and himself as well to Parashiva.

Parashiva says, "The body is the offering." A yogi is he who consumes his gross and subtle bodies in the fire of consciousness, consumes the outer universe also in the same fire and lives in identity with Shiva. On completing his sadhana, on attaining perfection, he is immersed in supreme bliss. That is his ritualistic, sacrificial bath.

ज्ञानमन्नम् (शिवसूत्र २/९)
Jnanam annam. (*Shivasutras* 2/9)
Knowledge is food.

Food is the very life of the embodied soul. By food the body arises; by food it is sustained; into food it merges in the end—the earth is rich with food. The food that is nourishing to a yogi and brings him satisfaction and bliss, is the awareness of his own nature, contented rest in his own *atman.* In *Sutra* 1/2, knowledge was said to be bondage. That was outer knowledge, implying forgetfulness of one's nature, ignorance of inner realities, the ego-sense, the sense of I-mine.

The other kind of knowledge is that of unity, arising by the grace of the Guru. This knowledge transcends the imaginary distinctions of logic: matter and consciousness, one Soul and many souls, the individual and the universal, the atom and the cosmos, liberation and bondage. This knowledge takes one beyond the reach of death, time and limitation, to the supreme Self and

supreme contentment. Knowledge, then, is food in the sense that it gives perfect satisfaction and perfect rest.

The state of enlightenment devours the illusory differences which previously obsessed the yogi—concepts of death and life, matter and consciousness, creature and creator, body and soul, man and woman, the householder and the renunciant. Ignorance too, is the food of a yogi.

After the blessing by the Guru, true knowledge springs from within. The yogi eats up both the merely conceptual knowledge which obstructs centering in the Self, and the ignorance which hides his own Spirit from him. He is immersed in perfect inner contentment.

मोहावरणात्सिद्धिः (शिवसूत्र ३/६)

Mohavaranat siddhih. (*Shivasutras* 3/6)

By the conquest of delusion the supreme realisation is attained.

Maya deludes men; she is the great enchantress. She lives with everyone, merges with and manipulates everyone, and catches them in her snares. In the *Gita* the Lord says, *mama maya duratyaya,* (My maya is hard to cross.)

Her way of seeing is perverse—the real seems unreal, consciousness becomes matter. She makes God man, Shiva *jiva* and the One many. Maya gives rise to *avarana,* the veil. By meditation, by Guru's grace, the different *tattvas* can be experienced in their different forms. Yoga and various spiritual practices cannot disclose the supreme reality: only meditation can help realise it. The supreme *tattva* is always manifest, always perfect.

Meditation removes the veil covering the light of the highest reality.

Parashiva is without birth and death, without beginning and end. It is devoid of thought. It is self-evident and fills everything. The transcendent Being exists everywhere but being deluded, we do not understand it. As our ignorance is destroyed, *udana jaya* arises, unfolding the power of knowledge. *Udana jaya* (Shaktipat) takes one beyond *prana* and *apana.* The path leaves behind the gross aspect of prana and moves along the ladder of its most subtle aspect to the realisation of the highest truth. The state of centredness from which there is no return, is *pranayama.*

The mind experiences sound, touch, form, taste and smell. *Pratyahara* is the focusing on the supreme truth, transcending the mind. To transcend *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* and know that Shiva is self-experienceable, is real meditation. Supreme Shiva is within me all the time, always; this awareness is *dharana.* The Shiva principle equally pervades the entire universe, including both subject and object. "I am not apart from Shiva." To continually experience this is *samadhi,* the merger in highest reality.

नर्तक आत्मा (शिवसूत्र ३/९)
Nartakatma. (*Shivasutras* 3/9)
The *atman* is the dancer.

The God of the Self is quite appropriately called a dancer or a great actor. Supremely free, perfect light, He bestows His grace everywhere while concealing His

true nature and enacting the states of waking, dream and deep sleep within His own being. He is the *atman* because, in conscious sport, He manifests from Himself the wonderful drama of the deluding and binding occupations of waking, the strange worlds of the dream state and the great void of deep sleep.

Who but Shiva can express the character of all beings and existences? Who but He has the power to project the drama of the three worlds? Parashiva alone is the Author and the Enactor of the scenes in the objective and subjective worlds. In the theatre the costumes, the speeches, gestures and actions of the characters, the scenes of laughter and of tears, the hero, Rama, and the villain, Ravana, are all creations of the playwright. In the same way, all the moving and unmoving, sentient and insentient creatures comprise the varied dance of the *atman*. With true knowledge one sees that the God of the Self is always enacting sportful scenes on His own stage out of love, for His own delight and ecstasy.

रङ्गोऽन्तरात्मा (शिवसूत्र ३/१०)
Rango'ntaratma. (*Shivasutras* 3/10)
The inner Self is the stage.

There is great mystery in this *sutra*. The *atman* manifests countless dramas in His non-being. He Himself becomes the stage, the actor and the costumes. He holds His sports for His own sake, and for His own delight.

The *atman* Himself is the stage on which He likes to manifest the drama of the universe. The inner Self is the place where He stages the scenes in which He wears

strange and various costumes. He assumes limitations of His own will and enacts different plays. He never becomes empty.

Assuming physical bodies, He appears as separate entities. In this condition He manifests His mundane sport through the sense-organs by means of His own dynamic Shakti. Becoming the subtle body, He transmigrates from one life-form to another in various births.

प्रेक्षकाणीन्द्रियाणि (शिवसूत्र ३/११)
Prekshakanindriyani. (*Shivasutras* 3/11)
The senses are the spectators.

The senses are the spectators who watch the *atman* stage the drama of the universe in the theatre of one's own being. The *atman's* sport is constantly observed by the five organs of perception, the five organs of action and the fourfold psychic instrument. When a yogi receives the Guru's grace, his mind, which had been witnessing the drama of the universe being rolled out, now turns inward. He attains Self-realisation. His inner experience teaches him that the whole world springs from the *atman.* His sense of differences dissolved, he rises to the awareness, 'I am Shiva'.

धीवशात्सत्त्वसिद्धिः (शिवसूत्र ३/१२)
Dhivashusattvasiddhih. (*Shivasutras* 3/12)
The truth is realised by pure intellect.

As one sees that the expanding universe is the sport of the *atman,* the exalted, divine awareness of the uni-

verse as an undifferentiated unity arises. This is steady, pure intellect surveying the nature of the *atman.* When the intellect becomes established in the conviction of the unity of all things, truth is realised. Then one can perceive even the subtlest throbbings of the *atman.*

The constant awareness that the universe is an unfolding of the one *atman* gives purity, universal love, refinement of intellect and oneness with the *atman.*

सिद्धः स्वतन्त्रभावः (शिवसूत्र ३/१३)
Siddhah svatantra bhavah. (*Shivasutras* 3/13)
A Siddha lives in total freedom.

The state of a Siddha is the state of freedom. Freedom is his very nature. He knows everything and can do anything. To see things as different from oneself is bondage. The Siddha has attained the state of unity-awareness, seeing himself in everything. He knows that the one *atman* pervades everywhere and that That is without a second.

For the embodied soul there are only two possibilities. One is the state of bondage in which he loses the awareness of his nature, his glory, his power of understanding, and becomes limited. He feels, 'I am small', 'I am bound', 'I am a sinner', 'I am subject to birth and death'. His own outlook is the thing that shrinks him day by day. As he meditates on and ponders bondage, he becomes completely bound.

The other possibility is the state of absolute freedom. By the grace of the Sadguru a man's inner Shakti is awakened through the process of Shaktipat. Unfolding, his Shakti fills him with Chiti, and he gradually is freed

from cravings and desires, the pull of the sense organs and from all limited states. He achieves total union with God.

He is a Siddha who has achieved mastery over his senses and their objects. He has risen above the three bodies and their corresponding states, and he sees this world which the ignorant experience as full of sorrow, as the outer sport of Parashakti. He has rid himself of notions of acceptance and rejection, and has burnt away the imaginary distinctions of virtue and sin, enjoyment and liberation, worldliness and spirituality, in the fire of inner knowledge. He regards all the thoughts that arise within him, whether good or bad, as the stirrings of the Self. He has become the universe, the Lord of the universe and the soul of the universe. He is his own path and his own destination. He is fully active and yet completely inactive. He is aware, 'I am supreme Shiva'. This great soul is a supreme Siddha.

यथा तत्र तथान्यत्र (शिवसूत्र ३/१४)
Yatha tatra tatha'nyatra. (*Shivasutras* 3/14)
As here, so elsewhere.

Having attained knowledge of the highest reality, a yogi begins to see his own Self everywhere, in the body, prana and senses. He beholds the same light within and without, permeating his gross and subtle bodies: the light of his soul spreads through the whole universe. He discovers that all countries, all external worlds, all realms, and in fact the entire cosmos, possess the same reality that is within him.

'Here' is the body, prana, senses and mind. 'Elsewhere' is the outer universe. All things and all beings embody the same impalpable essence.

Drunk with the ecstasy of divine revelation, one devotee exclaims, "In the mirror of my heart there is the image of Mohammed, the Lord. Wherever I bow my head, I see His face. How glorious is the light that is Mohammed, the light created by God!" This is the perfection of truth. "Know the One to be within and without—this is the Guru's teaching," says Nanak, a realised being, a Siddha.

A Siddha, having attained supreme freedom, lives wholly in the Self. Faithfully following the path shown by his Guru, a yogi becomes emancipated from the cravings of his body, mind and senses. Greed, pleasure-seeking and sensuality are marks of the soul bound by duality; the free man cannot be allured by any temptation of the world. Nondual consciousness, awareness of the Self of all, is entirely beyond the reach and pull of the senses. To regard everything as one's own Self—this is perfect celibacy and perfect freedom from desire.

आसनस्थः सुखं हृदे निमज्जति । (शिवसूत्र ३/१६)

Asanasthah sukham hride nimajjati. (*Shivasutras* 3/16)

The yogi who is established in a steady posture, easily becomes immersed in the heart.

'Posture' really means the posture of true knowledge and understanding, not the lotus posture or the perfect posture. Constant awareness of the identity of the uni-

verse and the Self, of the all-pervading One Being, is the steady posture. Remaining firm in this posture, one need not resort to other practices. He remains conscious within himself, 'I am consciousness, the Shakti, which is both immanent and transcendent'. Such a yogi rises above limited body-consciousness, shedding all his *samskaras* (past impressions) and becomes absorbed in the bliss of the Self. He easily gets immersed in that ocean of nectar from which the universe flows.

One who has assumed this posture has no need to practise concentration, fixing his gaze above, below, or in the middle, or in front or behind, or right or left, on higher or lower centres, inside or outside his body. He doesn't turn his mind to some object of meditation. He doesn't have to meditate on the senses or primal elements. He dissolves all duality in unity with the Self. Remaining in this state is liberation, the transcendence of all phenomena. It is possible only as a result of initiation by a true Guru, which awakens the inner Shakti and stabilises the mind in the heart, that vast ocean of bliss, the scene of Parashakti's joyful reveling. Devotion to the Guru assures that the seeker will enter there.

Coming out from the steady posture of meditation, immersion in the ocean of the heart, the yogi sees the sport of Parashakti in the outer universe too. His natural meditation goes on whether he is seated or standing, conversing or performing sense functions. He beholds the bliss of his heart flowing all around him. Constant meditation comes only through the Guru's grace.

मग्नः स्वचित्तेन प्रविशेत् (शिवसूत्र ३/२१)
Magnah svachittena pravishet. (*Shivasutras* 3/21)
Becoming absorbed, one should enter the inner mind.

By a subtle effort of the mind, one should merge all thoughts into the inner Self. This is the state of the absorbed mind. Let the meditator enter the *sushumna* (the subtle central nerve) by means of the inner yoga obtained by Guru's grace. Let him discard all gross techniques like the inhalation, retention and exhalation of the breath that constitute *pranayama.* The prana entering the *sushumna* by Kundalini's favour, begins to throb subtly. This is Maha Yoga or Siddha Yoga.

Pranayama, pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses from their objects), and concentration are physical means. A yogi who has received grace does not have to practise them. He should strive earnestly to become absorbed in the awareness 'I am That': this is the pure I-consciousness in which That is identical with I. The inner *pranayama* occurring spontaneously in the central nerve is the means by which this state can be entered. In this *sutra* 'becoming absorbed and entering the inner mind' refers to the awareness of one's inner nature, or steady *So'ham* awareness.

प्राणसमाचारे समदर्शनम् (शिवसूत्र ३/२२)
Pranasamachare samadarshanam. (*Shivasutras* 3/22)
Evenness of prana brings equality-consciousness.

Prana is the most important thing in the body, it keeps it alive. Without it even the individual self will

have no force; it is the power of animation. All beings, sentient or insentient, owe their existence to prana.

When the prana becomes uneven, the sense of duality arises and the mind weaves new webs of fancy. With thoughts and fancies arising, with the world of imagination continually appearing and disappearing, how can peace be in the mind? So a yogi strives to subdue his prana in order to subdue his mind. For this purpose he resorts to a variety of yogic processes like *pranayama.*

When the inner Shakti awakes by Guru's grace, prana is purified and becomes even. *Prana* and *apana* become equal and then consciousness and matter, subtle and gross, are seen to be one, even as one sees the different parts of his body as one. The awareness of the equality of all things dawns and rises to its full glory. The recipient of the grace of the Sadguru experiences the throb of Parashakti and sees that the mantra, its component syllables, the Guru, the mantra deity and the mantra practiser are indeed one. He sees that the whole universe lives by the support of his inner Self. He sees the same mass of bliss-consciousness moving in all names and forms, and in all the outward-oriented thoughts of his mind.

Such a yogi lives in the divine state of unity with Shiva, under all conditions of life. He sees that the One Being pervades all castes and races, all stages of life, all deities, all materials and objects, all facets of worldly existence. He has attained full consciousness that his Self manifests as the universe and motivates the varied activities of his mind, intellect and imagination. The Self moves his *prana* and *apana* and pulses in his outer and inner perceptions. He realises, 'All is Shiva'.

चितिः स्वतंत्रा विश्वसिध्दिहेतुः (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् १)
Chitih svantantra vishvasiddhihetuh.
(*Pratyabhijnahridayam* 1)
Chiti creates the universe of Her own free will.

Chiti is supremely free. She is self-revealing. She is the only cause of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. She exists, holding the power within Her that creates, sustains and destroys. The prime cause of everything, She is also the means to highest bliss. All forms, all places and all instants of time are manifested from Her. She is all-pervading, always completely full and of everlasting light. Manifesting as the universe, still She remains established in Her indivisibility and unity. Within the Blue Light, She pulsates as ambrosial bliss. There is nothing apart from Her. There is no one like Her. She is only One, the supreme witness, the One who is called cosmic consciousness or Supreme Shiva. She is ever solitary. In the beginning, in the middle and in the end, only Chiti is. She does not depend on any other agency; She is Her own basis and support. As She alone exists, She is in perfect freedom.

Desiring to create, She expands Herself of Her own free will. She manifests differences in Her being, appearing in countless forms and shapes. In man this conscious spirit becomes the gross, subtle, causal, and supracausal bodies, the five sheaths, the four states and the fourfold psychic instrument. She becomes the five elements and combines them to make different life forms. She becomes the 72,000 *nadis* (subtle nerves or channels), the seven bodily constituents, the five vital airs and their functions, also the parts of the body from head to foot.

She expresses Herself as pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, fear, disease and agitation, as childhood and youth; as heaven and hell. Creating all things, She infuses them with Her spirit. Though Chiti becomes the universe in this manner, still She does not discard Her transcendent aspect under which She remains always exactly the same—full of light, pure and untainted. In Her transcendent aspect She is detached from the waking state and the good and bad actions performed in it. She is detached from all the events of the dream state. She is detached from the void of deep sleep. She dwells in the supracausal transcendental state, transcending even that. She is pure awareness. Living in and as the universe, She is also apart from it as its eternal witness.

स्वेच्छया स्वभित्तौ विश्वमुन्मीलयति । (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् २)
Svecchaya svabhitau vishvamunmilayati. (Pratyabhijnahridayam 2)
By the power of Her own will alone She unfolds the universe upon Her own screen.

The highest Shiva, by His own free will, projects in Himself this universe where all beings live. There is no other material cause of creation. Chiti is the ground on which the universe is supported. In Her essence, She remains ever the same.

The powers of the Lord are infinite. He enjoys supreme freedom. He is capable of granting what has not been willed by destiny, He can take away that which has been; He can change cosmic laws. He needs no help to create a universe since He Himself becomes the universe within Himself.

Even when it reflects large and diverse things in itself, a clear mirror remains clear and pure, not undergoing even the slightest change in its nature. Similarly, the Lord does not suffer the least diminution of His fullness, divinity and perfection even as He creates this variegated cosmos by His boundless might.

Spiritually considered, the world is not world, but the Master of the world. God makes the world from the substance of His own being. Whatever form He may assume, whatever costume He may wear, whatever shape He may take, He remains the same.

चितिरेव चेतनपदादवरूढा चेत्यसंकोचिनी चित्तम्। (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् ५)

Chitireva chetana padadavarurha chetyasankochini chittam. (*Pratyabhijnahridayam* 5)

Chiti Herself, descending from the plane of pure consciousness, becomes the mind by contracting in accordance with the object perceived.

This aphorism is the very life-blood of sadhana. It is priceless. If a seeker could understand this aphorism alone, and believe in its truth, meditation would come to him by itself, and so would knowledge. He would become Shiva.

Chiti descends from Her true condition, from Her nature which is pure consciousness, assumes the forms of the objects She perceives, contracts Herself, and becomes the mind. You must know the complete truth about the mind. You can never overrate the mind's importance—it is full of Chiti. If you don't understand your mind you can't know anything else in the world.

And without this right understanding you will not be able to steady your mind no matter how much you try.

Philosophers and psychologists have produced scores of conflicting theories concerning the mind. But for all their elaborate treatises, not a single one of them has been able to grasp the nature of the mind in its entirety. The fact is that the only one who can write authoritatively on the mind is the man who directly perceives the thirty-six elements or principles as they are. The only one who can reveal the truth of the mind is the man who has received Kundalini Yoga by the grace of his Guru and whose inner eye of knowledge has been opened by the power of Shaktipat. This man alone is enlightened and great. He apprehends the reality of the inner and outer worlds. The sage and preceptor Vasugupta was such a being. His insights into the nature of the mind are absolutely true; they originate from the divine source, from Parashiva.

Often an aspirant looks for answers in books and toils interminably to control his mind. He exhausts himself in his attempt at suppression, only to find that he is as far away from control as at the outset. His mind controls him and leads him around. All that is left to him is self-pity. Every day his mind grows in restlessness and turbulence. He falls into a despair so black that he renounces the spiritual path, completely convinced that the mind is impossible to control. In that despair he dissipates all that he had gained through yoga.

A yogi should ponder the nature of the mind deeply —the mind that he wants to subdue, dominate and stabilise. What exactly is it? Of what substance is it made? How does it come into existence? What purpose does it serve? How can it be overcome? It is essential to grap-

ple with these questions. Awareness of the mind's nature is the root of success in yoga, meditation and all spiritual disciplines. Meditation will not be far from one who has acquired true knowledge of the mind. Enlightenment too will quickly seek him out.

न चित्तं नाम अन्यत् किंचित् अपि तु सैव भगवती तत् ॥

Na chittam nama anyat kinchit apitu saiva bhagwati tat.

The mind is nothing but another name of Goddess Chiti.

The mind is neither a concrete thing, nor a set of inclinations. It is not material, neither is it void nor inert. It is Goddess Chiti, the deity of Shaivites, the Shiva-Shakti who lives in Parashiva and shares His nature fully. She is not at all different from Him. Chiti is that which creates many from one, making diverse names and forms out of Shiva who is pure consciousness. Her creations are different from Shiva and they are not different from Shiva. And—both at once—they are different and not different from Him. Similarly, they are separate from Shiva and also one with Him, and also simultaneously separate from and one with Him. They are equal as well as unequal, harmonious as well as antagonistic.

Chiti is the glorious supreme Shakti. And this same Chiti becomes the mind. She is Rama's Sita, Krishna's Radha, the Gauri of Parashiva. She is the divine power of grace. She is the dynamic Kundalini, the revered Goddess of yogis. She is the poet's power of poetry, the Purusha's Prakriti, and the insensate power of ignorance in ignorant people. And She is the life force, the throb of the Self that vibrates into the mind, imagination, ego and prana. The same divine Chiti is called the

mind as She takes on the forms of outer objects to function in the outer world. To carry on worldy life, She descends from Her true nature, accepts limitation and becomes worldly. The mind is only another name for Chiti's phase of voluntary limitation.

When Chiti covers Herself with the three *gunas*, She becomes the mind. On identifying Herself as an entity among other entities, She becomes the ego. And She becomes the intellect by assuming the functions of judgment and discrimination. When She attains the knowledge of Her own essential nature, She is again Goddess Chiti. Chiti constantly pulsates into numberless variations in different ways; and the creation of this infinity of diverse vibrations is Her blissful sport.

The true Lord of yoga is the yogi who is full of faith and devotion for his Guru and who possesses the eye of knowledge. He sees the thoughts and fantasies pulsing in his mind in their endless variety as the external throbs of his Self. He is anchored in the state of supreme divinity even in the midst of mental activity:

विकल्पानां प्रसरेऽपि महेशता ।

Vikalpanam prasrepi maheshata.

(*Ishwarapratyabhijna* 11/12)

Such an eye is obtained by the Guru's grace. The aspirant can then see directly that it is his own inner Self that becomes the mind as well as the multitude of sense objects.

मृत्कार्यभूतोऽपि मृदोनाभिन्नः ।

—*Mritkaryabhutopi mridonabhinnah.* A clay pot is still clay, and a gold ornament is still gold. In the same way the outer expansion of the Self which appears as the world is still the Self. As soon as one realises this

he passes into meditation spontaneously; this is the natural meditation one receives from the Guru. The Guru of Lord Rama, Vasishtha, told Him that the mind is the world. When the mind sheds limitation and becomes Chiti, the universe is seen as it truly is—as the Master of the universe, as Rama.

चिद्वत्तच्छक्तिसंकोचात् मलावृतः संसारी। (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् ९)
Chidvattcchakti sankochat malavrutah samsari.
(*Pratyabhijnahridayam* 9)
Chiti, universal consciousness, because of contraction, becomes an ordinary being, subject to limitations.

The truth is that the highest Lord, pure consciousness, lives in absolute freedom. He is all-pervading and all-knowing. By His glorious Shakti He can do whatever He likes. If an emperor wants to enact the role of an ordinary constable, he puts aside his pomp and majesty, his elephants and horses, and plays a commoner for a while. In exactly the same way, the supreme Lord, who is of the nature of consciousness, sheds His undifferentiated state and accepts differences. Then His various powers of will, knowledge and action appear to have shrunk, though this is not really so. This limited state is the state of ordinary people who are subject to imperfections.

There are three basic types of limitation called:

मलाः आणवीय, मायीय, कार्मिक।
malas: *anaviya, mayiya* and *karmic.*

When Shiva assumes the *anaviya mala,* His power of will suffers a contraction, and the consciousness of

imperfection—so alien to His essential nature—arises in His perfect Being. He begins to consider Himself a small individual.

Mayiya mala involves the diminution of His power of knowledge. He is overcome by the sense of distinction, seeing things different from one another and from Himself. Dualities are perceived in the one, all-pervading, undifferentiated Lord, the One-without-a-second.

The *karmic mala* is the limitation of His power of action. Now the omnipotent Shiva can accomplish only certain things subject to the limitations imposed by His organs of action. Now He becomes involved in good and bad deeds, noble and evil undertakings.

When Shakti contracts, the highest consciousness becomes bound by these three limitations, its primal powers of omniscience, omnipotence, perfection, everlastingness, and all-pervasiveness are experienced in a reduced condition. Although omniscient, He knows only a few things; though omnipotent, He feels helpless and acts effectively only in a small sphere. The Master of perfect bliss, He is ensnared in pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion. The Eternal Being cries aloud from fear of death, regarding Himself as mortal. Pervading all space and form, He grieves because He is tied to a particular place and a particular form. This is the condition of Shakti-poverty; it is the experience of all creatures caught in the transmigratory cycle.

The grace of the Guru rids the aspirant of his apparent Shakti-poverty, and his limited power begins to evolve. As soon as the great Kundalini, Shiva's own Shakti, becomes fully awake, Shiva experiences Himself as Shiva once more, and the bound individual becomes the supreme Lord. In the heart, the conscious-

ness, 'I am imperfect' dissolves into the 'I am perfect' awareness. This is the state of the *jivan-mukta,* who revels unceasingly in the awareness, 'I am Shiva'.

तथापि तद्वत् पंचकृत्यानि करोति । (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् १०)

Tathapi tadvat panchakrutyani karoti. (Pratyabhijna-hridayam 10)

Even in that state, He (the embodied soul) performs the five processes.

The perfect Shiva, in His state of perfection, is always at play, carrying on the five processes for the upliftment of His devotees. Sri Kshemaraj praises the supreme Lord in this way :

नमः शिवाय सततं पंचकृत्य विधायिने चिदानन्दघन स्वात्मपरमार्थविभासने

Namah Shivaya satatam panchakrutya vidhayine chidanandaghana svatma paramartha vibhasane.

Salutations to supreme Shiva who carries on the sport of the five grand processes without ceasing—that is, creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and grace. He continually reveals the true nature of the highest reality; that is, He Himself is all consciousness and bliss.

God is consciousness and bliss and ever one with His nature. Still, He assumes the five processes for sport. Similarly, God in bondage as the embodied soul, always carries out the five processes on a small scale.

The *Svachhanda Shastra* says that God's nature, even in the state of bondage, is consciousness. The Lord takes on a body, prana and sense organs of His own will and acts accordingly. He manifests the same objects outside which flash in His consciousness within Him.

He performs the five processes in a limited way with limited power. When God, acting in the outer world through body, prana and senses, perceives different objects in different instants of time and at different points of space, that is creation. Sustenance is the perceiving of an object for a length of time. Dissolution is the vanishing of an object into the mind after having appeared there, as when one object is replaced in consciousness by another. Concealment (of its true nature) comes about when undifferentiated consciousness differentiates itself into manifold forms. To vibrate once again as pure undifferentiated light after manifesting as diverse objects is grace or revelation. This interesting subject is discussed in great detail in the *Spanda-Sandoha.*

There is an important difference between the doctrine of Brahman, held by the followers of Vedanta, and this philosophy of Self-recognition. According to Vedanta, Brahman is the cause of the universe; He is ever pure, awake and free. He is bliss. But the world is false, the result of ignorance. Only Brahman is real, and one becomes Brahman when false knowledge is replaced by true. On the other hand, the philosophy of Self-recognition teaches that the world is not false. Emanating from supreme Shiva, it runs by His will. By His will also He withdraws it one day. Parashiva is in need of no other materials to create the universe; He constantly carries out the five functions. In just the way that Shiva is the supreme creator and destroyer of the universe, the individual self continually performs the five processes in a limited way. Creation, sustenance and destruction, concealment and grace are continually going on, both

on the cosmic level and on the individual level. Meditate on them. Everyone is conscious of the various functions of the mind: if one were to dwell on the five processes just a little they would reveal their significance.

We perceive an object at a certain instant of time, a certain point in space and in a certain form. At the same time we grasp its colour and other characteristics. In the moment of perception we create the object; its appearance in our mind is its creation therein. When the image of a cow vibrates in the mind, the cow is created; the thought of a bridge is the creation of that bridge. Thus, whatever throbs in our mind comes into existence. When an object in the mind is replaced by another, the space, time, substance and form all change. The cow that had been created is gone, replaced by say, an elephant; that is the cow's destruction in the mind.

An object exists as long as we perceive it without any break; it may be for a moment or longer. If the image of the elephant remains in our mind for twenty minutes, we have sustained it for that amount of time.

When the objects that are undifferentiated within Chiti appear as different entities, that is concealment of Chiti's true nature. When, after hearing and seeing many different objects, we suddenly become conscious of their identity with consciousness, we accomplish the fifth task: grace. Grace is nothing but seeing objects as one with self-luminous Chiti, even though they may appear to be different.

Yogis remain aware with unwavering faith of the continual flow of thoughts and the five processes within their minds. The seeker who becomes aware of his own authorship of the five acts achieves the divine state. It

is said, for this reason, that those who, on receiving grace, continually contemplate consciousness or Parashiva within themselves, become *jivanmuktas.* They regard this cosmos as an expansion of their own Self. Though such a person may appear to be bound because he posseses body, prana and senses, he is in truth a free soul. But those who consider the objects of perception to be different from the Self forever remain in bondage.

सृष्टिसंहारकर्तारं विल्यस्थितिकारकम् ।
अनुग्रहकरं देवं प्रणतार्ति विनाशनम् ॥

Srishti samhara kartaram vilaya sthiti karakam anugrahakaram devam pranatarti vinashanam.

The Lord is the author of creation, sustenance, destruction, concealment and grace. He removes the suffering of those who take refuge in Him.

Parashiva is full of affection for His devotees. He destroys their sorrow, poverty, ignorance and darkness, and He helps them through crises. For their protection He continually holds His sport, enacting the drama of the five processes. The five processes exhibit His splendour, and He works through them to promote the welfare of his devotees in every part of the universe. The wise man contemplates the processes within himself and is soon intoxicated, identifying himself with Shiva. He sits calmly and watches the various thoughts arise in his mind. Chiti Herself becomes these thoughts. In the boundless expanse of Her blissful consciousness, She creates and dissolves countless worlds. This is Her wonderful play.

तत्परिज्ञाने चित्तमेव अन्तर्मुखीभावेन चेतनपदाध्यारोहात् चितिः।
(प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् १३)

Tatparijnane chittameva antarmukhibhavena chetana-padadhyarohat chitih. (Pratyabhijnahridayam 13).

Attaining full knowledge of That, the mind turns within, rises to the plane of pure consciousness and becomes Chiti.

Chiti becomes the mind when She turns Her eyes from Her own nature and becomes involved in the external world and its affairs. The mind, having acquired full knowledge of the five processes of creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and grace, that go on within by themselves, follows the path of meditation initiated by the Guru and turns within. Interest in meditation increases, and the limited knowledge of external objects dissolves proportionately. The mind, penetrating its own depths, obtains inner knowledge, this inward-directed movement merging the mind into the Self. Resting in the Self, the mind rises again to the plane of consciousness, Chiti. This is the culmination of sadhana when the mind melts into total awareness, perfect bliss and full contentment.

स्वशक्तिविकासे तु शिव एव।

Svashakti vikase tu Shiva eva

On the unfolding of Shakti one becomes Shiva.

Having become alienated from its source and taken on the form of objects, the light of consciousness turns within and one's Shakti is unfolded. The aspirant centres in the Self, the state of Shiva. The enlightened souls who possess this wisdom, who can see beyond, call

it the religion of man and the great spiritual pilgrimage. It is the homeland.

The mind filled with objects and roaming in the outer world possessed by differences is in the reduced condition of the embodied soul. When it looks within in meditation by Guru's grace, the journey is redirected from ignorance towards knowledge, from bondage toward liberation, from birth and death towards *jivanmukti,* from sin and sorrow towards the most sacred absorption in Brahman. All differences are merged into the undifferentiated, and, in the end, man becomes Parashiva. One should meditate all the time.

बललाभे विश्वमात्मसात्करोति । (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् १५)

Balalabhe vishvamatmasatkaroti. (Pratyabhijnahridayam 15)

By acquiring the inherent power of Chiti, the aspirant assimilates the universe into himself.

In this context 'power' means the awareness, 'I am the soul of the universe'. The universe which had appeared so alien becomes one's own with the attainment of this awareness. By the power of the Guru, the great Shakti, the holiest deity, Kundalini, is fully awakened in the seeker, and Siddha Yoga is activated within him. He overcomes limitation and becomes conscious of the unity of his Self and the universe as his innermost nature reveals itself. This is true power. By the power of the Guru's grace, he ceases to regard the universe, from Sadashiva to the earth, as separate from himself. All beings are now only different forms of Chiti. He merges

his individual identity into Chiti, becoming one with the cosmos.

We can see that in normal life a person who thinks of himself as poor, or lonely or weak, lacking in skill or strength, a victim of sorrow and misery, actually becomes that way. By the grace of the Guru such a person can throw off his sense of weakness and inferiority. As Siddha Yoga works in him by the Guru's power, he rises to the awareness of his identity with the universe, and makes it his own.

मध्यविकासाच्चिदानन्दलाभः । (प्रत्यभिज्ञाहृदयम् १७)

Madhyavikasacchidanandalabhah. (*Pratyabhijnahridayam* 17)

By the unfoldment of the *madhya* centre, the bliss of consciousness is acquired.

Goddess Samvitti, the Goddess of universal consciousness, possessing infinite power and glory, is the true centre of this animate and inanimate universe. She dwells within all things, pervading them in subtle form. Without Her grace, no one can realise his real nature. She involves Herself, of Her own free will, in the sportful maze of Her own making, and manifests all the shapes and forms which fill the universe. Assuming prana and intellect, and all the other organs, and emanating thousands of nerves, She fashions the human body. The great Shakti pervades the body, particularly its central nerve, *sushumna,* which extends from the *sahasrar,* situated in the middle of the *brahmarandhra* in the brain, to the *muladhar* at the base of the spine. She supports both Brahman and pranashakti therein. All

our thoughts, feelings and inspirations spring from the central nerve and subside in it. The mind arises from Brahman and vibrates into thoughts by the power of prana. One who lacks Guru's grace is ignorant of these secrets.

Goddess Samvitti, Chiti Shakti, expresses Herself in countless ways, assuming countless shapes and forms. She fills the whole gross and subtle cosmos. She is the Indweller in all creatures, beyond the grasp of the senses. She makes the body, consisting of seven constituents and 72,000 nerves, and enters it as prana. She is present everywhere in the body in subtle form. There She causes prana to move through the nerves at lightning speed. She circulates blood in a systematic manner.

Of the 72,000 nerves, one hundred are important. Of these hundred, ten are very important. Of these ten, three are outstanding. And of these three, one is the most significant. That is *sushumna,* the *brahmanadi,* the Samvitti *nadi,* the *madhya nadi,* or the pathway of the great Kundalini. All nerves are supported by it. The various good and evil thoughts and feelings such as love, devotion, attachment and hatred appear from and disappear into it.

Though the central nerve extends from the *sahasrar* to the *muladhar,* one remains unaware of it without Guru's grace. Only by receiving Shaktipat through Guru's grace is the central nerve unfolded. This is followed by purification of the nerves, of the seven bodily constituents and of the mind. In the end, the aspirant becomes centred in the *sahasrar.* In other words, he becomes God from a human being, Shiva from an individual creature. Then he sees directly that all mental states, all salutary and harmful mental movements—the

consciousness of one's divinity and that of a limited existence, identification with the Guru and awareness of oneself as a disciple—all these arise and dissolve by the power of Samvitti spreading through the central nerve. Only he is a true meditator, a truly enlightened being, who has attained this knowledge.

If the central nerve is not unfolded, man cannot evolve. The unfolding of the central nerve is the pilgrimage to liberation, the path of Self-realisation, the attainment of the bliss of consciousness.

मानुषं देहमास्थाय छन्नऽऽस्ते परमेश्वरः। (शैव आगम)

Manushyam dehamasthaya cchanaste parameshvarah. (Shaivite Scripture)

The supreme Lord, entering the human body, secretly dwells in it.

What Utpaldeva says here is true, and what a wonder it is! Man commits a gross blunder when he does not try to find out who it is that lives in his body. The Lord says in the *Gita*:

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत।

"Kshetrajnam chapi mam viddhi sarvakshetreshu Bharata."

"O, Arjuna, know Me to be the knower of the field in all fields." The body is called a field since the fruits of all actions are reaped there; all consequences, good and bad, are experienced there. God, the Self, dwells in this field as a witness, watching what occurs there without being moved.

यथा च भगवान विश्वशरीरः।

Yatha cha bhagawan vishvasharirah.

The universe is God's body.

Long ago Lord Shiva replied to a question by Maitreya in this way:

देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तो आत्मा केवलः शिवः।

"Deho devalayah proktah atma kevala Shiva."

"O, Maitreya, this body is the holiest temple. The supreme Self, supreme Shiva, abides in it as its Self."

Wise Nachiketa asked Yama what was the closest place he could find God. Yama said,

अशरीरं शरीरेश्वनवस्थेश्ववस्थितम्।
महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति॥

"Ashariram sharireshvanavastheshvavasthitam
mahantam vibhumatmanam matva dhiro no shochati."

"O, Nachiketa, God lives in all bodies and is yet without a body. He is the eternal and unmoving reality behind all fleeting and moving things. He is supreme. He is all-pervading. By seeing Him in meditation, man becomes steady, courageous, discerning and free from sorrow, and attains the highest peace."

There is no deity like the Self, no temple like the body, no *japa* like *So'ham,* no worship like meditation. There is no mother or father like Guru Nityananda, no spiritual system like the doctrine of Self-recognition.

आत्माधिकं किमस्ति तत्त्वः।

Atmadadhikam kimasti tattvah.

Is there anything greater than the Self?

Even a momentary awareness that God functions through one's body is attended by great peace. The supreme Lord is indeed the dweller in the body.

सर्वो ममायं विभव इत्येवं परिजानतः।
विश्वात्मनो विकल्पानां प्रसरेऽपि महेशता ॥
(ईश्वरप्रत्यभिज्ञा ४ अ १ आ ११ का)

Sarvo mamayam vibhava ityevam parijanatah,
vishvatmano vikalpanam prasrepi maheshtah.
(Ishwarapratyabhijna 4/1/12).

The yogi who knows that the entire splendour of the universe is his, who rises to the consciousness of unity with the universe, retains his divinity even in the midst of various thoughts and fancies.

Knowledge has great value. With right knowledge meditation becomes easy. Without it, the mind is afflicted by suffering and will not become still to meditate. Therefore, *jivanmukti* is not far from the one who has attained the knowledge of the true nature of the universe, its basic elements and their modifications, and of the mind and its countless images and ideas.

What is the universe? Supreme Shiva has Himself become earth, water, fire, air, space, rivers, oceans and various bodies. The same nameless One pervades countless forms, shapes and names. The infinite beauty of the cosmos is the Self's own glory, its own beauty. Whatever the figures painted on a canvas, whatever the style, they are the creation of the same painter who uses the same brush, the same colours, the same power of conception. The Maker of the whole cosmos is Shiva; it is made in Shiva—the paints, brushes and canvas are all Shiva. From the Guru's viewpoint all that is is Parashiva manifesting only Himself. Baba Nityananda used to say, "Your father is Brahman, your mother is Brahman, you are Brahman. All are Brahman. Everything is Brahman. Where else do you look for Him?"

He who knows that 'All creation is the splendour of my Self', is not disturbed from his natural, liberated state, even when thoughts and fancies move in his mind. For to him all these and the substance of which they are made, are nothing but vibrations of Parashiva. Considering all space, time and forms to be the sport of consciousness, he attains the state of divinity even in the midst of mental activity. All his ideas are Shiva, his images are Shiva, his agitation is Shiva and its consequences are also Shiva. Regarding everything as his own wealth, he remains tranquil. The true knowledge of the splendour of the Self is indeed the state of highest divinity. This awareness is indeed meditation. Whatever thought pulses in the mind, to see that as a ray of Chiti—this is the most effective meditation technique.

तेन शब्दार्थचिन्तासु न सावस्था न यः शिवः (स्पन्दकारिका २/३)
Ten shabdartha chintasu na savastha na yah Shivah.
(*Spandakarika* 2/3, 4)
There are no sounds, meanings or thoughts which are not Shiva.

The Lord originally manifested Himself as sound—*adau bhagawan shabda rashah.* All the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, from *a* to *ksha,* having originated from *Om,* the supreme Lord, are Parashiva. The saints and sages have attained full God-realisation through the worship of Brahman as the Name.

शब्दब्रह्मेति यच्चेदं शास्त्रम ।
Shabda brahmeti yacchedam shastram.
The scriptures say that sound is Brahman.

Birds and animals communicate through sound-language. Man communes with his fellow-beings through speech. Speech consists of sentences; sentences are formed by words; words are a combination of letters; letters are nothing but sounds. Before they are uttered, sounds exist in the unmanifest state. They are both different and not-different from Shakti. Subtly considered, they are one with Shakti: Parashakti or Paravak itself.

All sounds are Shiva. All meanings conveyed by sounds are Shiva. All thoughts arising from sounds are Shiva. There is not a single sound which is not Shiva, not a single meaning different from Shiva who is all knowledge. There is not a single thought which is apart from the mind, and the mind is Chiti or Shiva. Sounds, meanings and thoughts are all Shiva. Even that which appears to be distinct from Shiva is nothing but Shiva.

इति वा यस्य संवित्तिः क्रीडात्वेनाखिलं जगत् ।
स पश्यन्सततं युक्तो जीवन्मुक्तो न संशयः ॥ (स्पन्दकारिका ३/३)

Iti va yasya samvittih kridatvenakhilam jagat
Sa pashyan satatam yukto jivanmukto na samshayah.
(*Spandakarika* 3/3).

This entire universe is a sport of universal consciousness. He who is constantly aware of this truth is a *jivanmukta,* no doubt.

In fact, this universe is not a universe. It is neither atoms nor nature nor a modification (of some basic substance.) It is neither an illusion as the illusionists hold, nor is it a void as the Voidists believe. Though it appears to be matter, appears to be earth, water, air, fire and

space, it is only Chiti's play and Kundalini's sport. It is the merry self-unfolding of consciousness.

It is only the One that becomes many. There is only the One in the many. Behind the differences lies the undifferentiated. The undifferentiated manifests differences. It is only the nondual becoming dual that revels unceasingly. Differences lie, not in the objective universe, but in the veil that covers the eye that sees. The lotion of the Guru's grace gives the yogi the eye to see truth. Only as long as consciousness is apprehended not as consciousness, but as the universe, is one bound. When there is no universe, how can there be bondage? The moment the concept of universe is eliminated, one becomes a *jivanmukta,* a totally liberated being.

नाशिवं विद्यते क्वचित् (स्वच्छन्दतन्त्र)

Nashivam vidyate kvachit. (Svacchandatantra)

Nothing that is not Shiva exists anywhere.

Shiva pervades everything without being different from anything. How can anything be other than Shiva? The Parashakti Chiti spreads everywhere in the universe; She is matter in material objects and consciousness in conscious beings. She takes on attributes, yet She is without attributes. It is She who is sporting everywhere. How can there be anything different from Her? In the universe that is only Chiti's play, what can be impure or unclean? They alone are without Shiva who see this universe that is Shiva as being without Shiva.

Man's ignorance makes him impure, a sinner, a vile creature. He projects his own loathsomeness on others, arrogating their purity to himself. Seeing his own projection of hell, he exclaims, "That one is without Shiva."

To think that anything can ever exist that is without Shiva is the vision of a blind man; dark confusion.

That which the ignorant see as the phenomenal universe is in reality the playful outer manifestation of consciousness. What can be done if a deluded person thinks that a rope is a snake? The snake, and the fear, the trembling, the stuttering speech, the palpitation of the heart caused by its appearance are illusion. The rope alone is the immutable truth. The imagined snake is the sport of the rope. Shiva is the 'is-ness' of everything. Shiva is real. Shiva is all pervading. He never ceases to exist. He never vanishes. He is eternal whether or not He is perceived to be so. He is everything. He is in the fallen in the same measure as in the redeemed. He is as much in the wicked as in the enlightened; as much in the sinner as in the saint; as much in an atom as in the vastest cosmos; as much in a drop as in an ocean. He is beyond all limitation of space, time and substance. He is everywhere. He is everlasting. He is in all. He is ever perfect. Indeed, to think that nothing is without Shiva is to see Shiva.

INTRODUCTION PART II

The *Guru Gita* is perhaps Baba Muktananda's favourite scripture, and its Sanskrit verses are group-chanted every morning as the sun rises, by the Ashramites in Ganeshpuri. It consists of a dialogue between Lord Shiva and His wife Parvati in which Shiva expounds the secret of the Guru-disciple relationship to Her. The text is found in the *Skanda Purana* of about the 8th century A.D. Baba composed these commentaries during the same period that he was working on the *Shivasutra* commentaries.

Baba has called the *Guru Gita* "The one indispensable text." In these commentaries another side of Baba is revealed: he is now the *bhakta,* intoxicated with the recitation of his Guru's virtues.

> If someone were to ask me what gives meaning to my life, I would only say "the name of my Guru." I discovered everything within me by my Guru's grace. Bhagawan Sri Nityananda was a perfect Guru. His essential teaching was, "The heart is the hub of all sacred places. Go there and roam in it." By remembering and worshipping such a Master with the recitation of the *Guru Gita,* one becomes holy.
> (Introduction to *Swadhyaya Sudha*)

There is a very different feel to these commentaries. The most visible difference is that most of them end in a

short paragraph in which Baba commands himself ("Muktananda receive. . . ." "Muktananda, worship. . . .") to be faithful to Guru Nityananda. To those who are aware of Baba's other writings, this is a familiar form. In *Mukteshwari,* his collection of aphorisms on spiritual life, Baba used the same device; and there is a tradition of this in Indian literature. The device does have a personalising effect. The *jnana* of the other commentaries becomes *bhakti* here, and yoga is made a concrete, personal and emotional pursuit in just the way that *bhakti* is more personal than *jnana.* And there is also a heightening of poetic effect generally. The main posture is praise of the Guru and this is accomplished in short, dramatic sentences.

> He is pure consciousness, eternal and imperishable. He is filled with the light of the Self. He is the goal of all mantras. He is Gurudev Nityananda.
> (*Nityanandaya Gurave*)

Baba builds from a prosaic opening:

> That the supreme truth—the Guru Principle—is beyond the senses is completely true. Yet when a seeker is given the gift of devotion to his Guru, all his senses are refined. And as the highest Shakti begins to flow through the senses, the extremely subtle mystery of the Guru's feet is grasped in speech, mind and imagination.
> (*Guru Gita* 43)

to praise of the Guru:

> He sees Shiva and Shakti as red and white lights shining through the Guru's feet. The Guru's feet should be worshipped every day. By their means one easily realises the immanent and transcendent aspects of Shiva. Their lustre radiates in the upper spaces of *sahasrar*.
> (*Guru Gita* 43)

to his closing:

> Shining white and red, red and white
> are the Guru's feet.
> Muktananda, worship them always.
> (*Guru Gita* 43)

Does this sit easily in the same book as Baba's commentaries on the Shaivite literature? It would be foolish to claim there is no difference between the two sets of commentaries—and yet there is no contradiction in the two approaches. In the Shaivite commentaries Baba invariably speaks of the need for the grace of a Siddha Guru; and here he constantly tells us that the Guru is no different from the Self.

> The Guru is Shiva, the Guru is the great Lord, the Guru is one's very own Self. He is not an ordinary human being.
> (*Guru Gita* 29)

Since Kashmir Shaivism demonstrates that the outer and the inner worlds are one, it is not surprising that

there is an external manifestation of the inner Self. That is the Guru. The external Guru is necessary, but what he does is activate the internal yogic processes—awakens the Kundalini—of his disciple by his grace or Shaktipat.

> The Self which dwells within everyone is the supreme Guru. Without the grace of the inner Self, having an outer Guru is a mere display.
> (*Guru Gita* 83)

Since a seeker's ignorance can easily mislead him, he needs the help of a man who has attained the final goal.

> I bow to Nityananda the Guru
> Who rescues his disciples from *samsara*
> Who has taken a body for the sake of his devotees
> Whose nature is Consciousness and pure Being.
> (*Nityanandaya Gurave*)

Baba comments, "The Guru is the divine power of grace activated for the good of his disciples. It is his nature to destroy the ignorance of his disciples easily, as the sun destroys darkness. He has assumed a mysterious physical form which is endowed with the power of Shaktipat."

The Guru's physical form is indeed a mystery. The Guru is not his body, yet it is necessary that he take a body. Since a meditator takes on the qualities of that which he meditates upon, the Guru's form becomes the object of meditation. ("The devotees of the Guru should meditate on him alone." *Guru Gita* 81) The inner Self seems to be an elusive thing, so far away, and the see-

ker needs a concrete model and guide. To some temperaments, only the possibility of a personal relationship with God can kindle the search. For the human being and his limited consciousness, a palpable object of devotion is extremely helpful. Baba often whimsically wonders why the same proud meditators who insist on worshipping the formless Guru do not equally insist on having a formless wife and a formless child as well. Indeed, the path of the Guru, Baba insists, is the only true or complete path, and not a difficult one at that. He emphasises how easy realisation is at the feet of a Siddha Guru; this is one of the recurrent themes of the commentaries.

> With the support of even a single particle of the dust of the Guru's lotus feet (the ocean of *samsara*) can be crossed with ease.
> (*Guru Gita* 53)

> When the fire of knowledge received from Guru Nityananda begins to blaze within, the karmic impressions of countless births will easily be consumed.
> (*Guru Gita* 73)

> Through ceaseless meditation on the Guru, a seeker easily attains oneness with the Absolute.
> (*Guru Gita* 119)

And though it is an easy path, there are pitfalls—a look at the final lines of each commentary reveals them.

Muktananda, turn away from false Gurus and charlatans.
(*Guru Gita* 94)

Muktananda, when your Master Nityananda is the God of all gods. . . why should your adore other deities?
(*Guru Gita* 98)

Why should Muktananda turn away from Nityananda's grace? He would only be trapped in show and pretence.
(*Guru Gita* 99)

Muktananda, . . . renouncing all other methods, your Kundalini will be aroused spontaneously.
(*Guru Gita* 119)

Two things, then, are favourite *bêtes noirs* of Baba: false teachers and promiscuous spirituality. At a time when so many charlatans are preying on the West's idealism and spiritual naivete, it is refreshing to hear Muktananda's constantly reiterated call for discrimination in choosing a Guru. A perfected Master is necessary, a false teacher creates a numbing perversion of spiritual life—exploiting his well-intentioned followers for selfish ends. How often has Baba urged seekers—as he urges himself here—to choose a Guru with at least as much careful thought and seriousness of purpose as they would a car or a new house.

Promiscuity is perhaps the gravest danger, and it is here that Baba's insistence on the need for a Guru is justified. Any of the genuine spiritual methods or teachers can take an aspirant very far—only his own

love for change and variety will subvert his efforts. Fidelity to a single Guru and a single path is the *sine qua non* of spiritual life—no quality is more important. Following a single Guru the disciple is able to go deep into his own being, while leaping from one to another he remains only a dilletante.

Superficial seekers whose interest is more in the 'show and pretence', the glamour of spiritual life, can never practise the yoga of surrender. The aspirant must place himself totally, one-pointedly in the charge of a Siddha and allow his life to change by those unerring hands.

> Surrender to the Guru is most potent magic. By it the gross becomes subtle, the ugly beautiful, the mortal immortal and bondage liberation.
> (*Guru Gita* 29)

And in the next lines Baba ties the two threads of his teaching together, *bhakti* with *jnana*:

> See the Guru in your body, your mind and your wealth, in everything. Muktananda, understand that the Guru is your life, your husband and wife.
> (*Guru Gita* 29)

The Guru is Shiva, is Chiti, is in all things. This is the meditation and the realisation, and it is brought about by the Guru's grace.

THE COMMENTARIES

नित्यानंदाय गुरवे शिष्यसंसारहारिणे।
भक्तकार्यैकदेहाय नमस्ते चित्सदात्मने ॥

Nityanandaya gurave
shishya-samsaraharine
Bhakta-karyaika-dehaya
namaste chit-sad-atmane

Salutations to Nityananda, the Guru, who rescues his disciples from transmigration; who has assumed a body to meet the needs of devotees; whose nature is consciousness and existence.

He is the Guru whose nature is pure being and pure consciousness and who exists always in all things. He is the self-illumined illuminator of all things. He is saturated in bliss. To him the entire cosmos is a sportful outer expansion of his own Being. His is the divine power of grace, activated for the good of his disciples. It is his nature to destroy the ignorance of his disciples easily, as the sun destroys darkness. He has assumed a mysterious physical form which is endowed with the power of Shaktipat. He brings *dharma,* prosperity, pleasure, and liberation to his devotees. Chiti revels within him and manifests in his works.

He is pure consciousness, eternal and imperishable. He is filled with the light of the Self. He is the goal of

all mantras. He is Gurudev Nityananda. I bow to him with all my heart in self surrender, in total awareness of my own nature.

Muktananda is liberated from time without beginning. By Sri Gurudev's grace his separate existence has been dissolved into the true Self. He is enveloped in the light of liberation. He is full of peace. He is immersed in his own bliss. He is indeed Nityananda, filled with the ecstasy of consciousness.

He is everlasting existence, consciousness and bliss.
He takes away the worldliness of his disciples.
He assumes his body which is the light of consciousness for the welfare of his devotees.
Muktananda, he is your very Self, he is Nityananda.

ध्रुवं तेषां च सर्वेषां
नास्ति तत्त्वं गुरोः परम् ।
आसनं शयनं वस्त्रं
भूषणं वाहनादिकम् ॥ (गुरुगीता २६)

Dhruvam tesham cha sarvesham
nasti tattvam guroh param,
Asanam shayanam vastram
bhushanam vahanadikam.
(*Guru Gita* 26)

This is the unshaking faith of the wise: there is nothing higher than the Guru. The aspirant should offer to the Guru seats, beds, clothes, ornaments, mounts and vehicles.

Giving is a noble act; and in giving the giver secures whatever he desires. One becomes the master of that which he offers to the Guru. By giving a fine *asana* (meditation mat) he masters *asana* (meditation posture). Giving a bed he will have many beds. By giving clothes he will have clothes in abundance; and when he gives jewellery he receives a treasure in return. But the disciple should try to make a gift of something that would please the Guru.

Give everything to the Guru: *asana,* bed, clothes, jewellery, and finally yourself. Muktananda, receive the Guru within yourself as both knowledge and direct experience.

शरीरमिन्द्रियं प्राणं
सद्गुरुभ्यो निवेदयेत् ।
आत्मदारादिकं सर्वं
सद्गुरुभ्यो निवेदयेत् ॥ (गुरुगीता २९)

Shariram indriyam pranam
sadgurubhyo nivedayet,
Atmadaradikam sarvam
sadgurubhyo nivedayet.
(*Guru Gita* 29)

Consecrate everything to the true Guru: the body, the senses, the prana. Consecrate everything to the Guru—the soul, the wife, everything.

If a seeker withholds some part of himself from the Guru he will suffer for it. If, on the contrary, he sur-

renders his body, senses, and prana to the Guru, the world can no longer be worldly to him.

After Shaktipat, the Guru himself moves as Shakti in the body, senses and prana of his disciple. Once the disciple has received the grace of his Guru he should not hesitate to consider his body, senses and prana to be the Guru's and to offer them to him. As his surrender grows, the Guru's Shakti will work inside him more and more.

When the body is given to the Guru, all of its actions are automatically transferred to him. Offered to God, it remains a body no longer, but is transmuted into Spirit, into the Guru's form.

When the senses are given to the Guru, their objects and pleasures are automatically transferred to him. The senses too become transmuted into Spirit, into the Guru's senses. The Guru's presence permeates the sense objects and sense pleasures.

When the prana is given to the Guru it becomes transmuted into Spirit, into the Guru's prana. Then the lust for life and the terror of death will no longer torment you. Once the Guru—who is the lord of prana—pervades prana, the whole universe, sustained by prana, becomes the Guru's form.

The idea of surrendering the wife and the family to the Guru can be confusing. A person who is himself the victim of lust will ascribe the same to the Guru. But the Guru is not an ordinary human being. The Guru is Shiva, he is Mahadev, he is one's very own Self. Offer him your wife, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mother and father and friends and relations.

The Guru is God Himself, and when you offer him your near and dear ones you will be filled with divine

love and liberated from binding relationships and from all your attachments. Your delusion will end; you will see your own Self in everyone and worship all as divine.

Surrender to the Guru is the most powerful magic. It can make the gross subtle, the ugly beautiful, the mortal immortal, the bound free.

See the Guru in your body, your mind, your wealth—in everything. Muktananda, understand that the Guru is your life, your wife, your husband.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु-
गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।
गुरुरेव परब्रह्म
तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥ (गुरुगीता ३२)

Gururbrahma, gururvishnur
gururdevo maheshvarah,
Gurureva parabrahma
tasmai shrigurave namah.
(*Guru Gita* 32)

The Guru is Brahma. He is Vishnu. He is Shiva. The Guru is indeed the Supreme Absolute. Salutations to the Guru.

All the sages and seers have called the Guru Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, as he encompasses the trinity within his being. They have gone even further and said that the Guru is also the blissful, transcendent Pure Being. There may be some who, because of their defective understanding and ignorance of the Guru's true nature, consider this description to be just an exaggeration. But

the verse is true, the worship of the Guru is valid, and he is undoubtedly the highest deity. The Guru is Mahesh because he annihilates all the previous thoughts, fancies and imaginings stirring in his disciple's heart. He is Brahma as he purifies his disciple's mind and implants the seed of the highest truth in it. He is Vishnu for he sustains and protects the new yogic awareness which he has instilled in his disciple. The Guru pervades the entire universe in his fullness and also lies beyond. Salutations again and again to the Guru!

The Guru embodies in his own person the three worlds, the three states and the three divinities. Why then, Muktananda, should you wander from one sacred place to another in search of Vishnu or Shiva?

हेतवे जगतामेव
संसारार्णवसेतवे ।
प्रभवे सर्वविद्यानां
शंभवे गुरवे नमः ॥ (गुरुगीता ३३)

Hetave jagatameva
samsararnavasetave,
Prabhave sarvavidyanam
shambhave gurave namah.
(*Guru Gita* 33)

Salutations to the Guru who is Shiva, the first cause of the universe, the bridge to cross the ocean of worldliness, the source of all knowledge.

All the great saints as well as all the different schools of spiritual philosophy have agreed that God is the root

of this universe. He has created it without any motive. He is the cause; He is the effect. He is the world and the world is His. It is He who permeates it.

The world is a strange process, a powerful net. Once one gets into it, there is no escape. Its grip is like that of a python. The harder one tries to get free, the more firmly he is caught. The world is an ocean difficult to cross. But the Guru serves as a bridge enabling his disciple to go across easily. By relying on his Guru, one will face no difficulty in getting free from the world's clutches.

There are countless branches of knowledge. Among these, fourteen are important. The Guru is the source of all knowledge. It can be acquired only from him. Only through him.

Salutations to the Guru who is supremely auspicious, who is Shiva.

Muktananda, Nityananda is the cause of the world. He is the bridge which takes us across worldliness. He radiates the light of Spirit. He is the Lord of knowledge. Reflect on him. Meditate on him.

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य
ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया ।
चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन
तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (गुरुगीता ३४)

Ajnanatimirandhasya
jnananjana shalakaya,
Chakshurunmilitam yena
tasmai shrigurave namah.
(*Guru Gita* 34)

Salutations to the Guru, who with the collyrium of knowledge, opens the eyes of one who is blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

A person may have eyes; yet without knowledge he is considered to be spiritually blind. By applying the lotion of awareness of the inner Self, the Guru opens the inner eye of his disciple and drives away the darkness of ignorance. Salutations to him !

God is the supreme light. He is manifest. In fact, it is very easy to see Him. Yet such thick folds of dark ignorance envelop man that he is unable to perceive the Lord who is so clearly perceptible. Ignorance seems to make God invisible.

Muktananda, the Guru is truly he who, by applying the collyrium of knowledge, opens the inner eye blinded by ignorance. He reveals the actual presence of Nityananda in his disciple's heart.

यत्सत्येन जगत्सत्यं
यत्प्रकाशेन भाति तत्।
यदानन्देन नन्दति
तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (गुरुगीता ३६)

Yatsatyena jagatsatyam
yatprakashena bhati tat,
Yadanandena nandanti
tasmai shrigurave namah.
(*Guru Gita* 36)

Salutations to the Guru whose existence causes the world to exist, whose light of knowledge makes it per-

ceptible; whose bliss makes possible all individual experiences of joy.

The Guru is supreme Existence and supreme Consciousness. He lends his own reality to the world (which would otherwise be unreal). With his transcendental light, he illumines it. It is he who makes us aware of what exists as well as what does not exist. He is the embodiment of the highest bliss. It is the rays of his joy which fill all sentient and insentient creatures with delight. They are reflected in all joyful objects and in all experiences of joy.

Salutations to the Guru who is saturated with bliss!

Muktananda, Nityananda is the inner Self of all. He is supremely effulgent. The world exists because he exists. The light of his love is all pervasive.

यस्य स्थित्या सत्यमिदं
यद्भाति भानुरूपतः।
प्रियं पुत्रादि यत्प्रीत्या
तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥ (गुरुगीता ३७)

Yasya sthitya satyamidam
yadbhati bhanurupatah,
Priyam putradi yatpritya
tasmai shrigurave namah.
(*Guru Gita* 37)

Salutations to the Guru whose existence makes this world real. He is the sun whose light illuminates it. His love makes sons lovable.

The Guru is the basis of all existence. He is the final truth. He remains unaffected by threefold division of time (past, present, future), being eternally true. In him the world appears as a real phenomenon. His light shines in the sun, stars and planets. He is the inner Self of all. He is bliss incarnate. His love is reflected in personal relationships such as mother-daughter, husband-wife. Salutations to the Guru!

Gurudev! Thy reality gives reality to the world, the sun and the moon. Muktananda, by the force of love for the Guru, Nityananda is perceived in one's own family.

यदङ्घ्रिकमलद्वन्द्वं
द्वन्द्वतापनिवारकम्।
तारकं सर्वदाऽऽपद्भ्यः
श्रीगुरुं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ (गुरुगीता ४३)

Yadanghri kamala dvamdvam
dvamdva tapa nivarakam,
Tarakam sarvada'padbhyah
shrigurum pranamamyaham.
(*Guru Gita* 43)

Salutations to the Guru whose lotus feet eradicate the agony of dualities, who protects us from all misfortunes and calamities.

That the supreme truth—the Guru Principle—is beyond the senses is completely true. Yet when a seeker is given the gift of devotion to his Guru, all his senses are refined. And as the highest Shakti begins to flow through the senses, the extremely subtle mystery of the

Guru's feet is grasped in speech, and in mind and imagination. The Guru is compelled to reveal himself fully to the disciple whose tongue constantly repeats the Guru's name (the Guru-mantra) and whose mind continually meditates on the Guru's form. That disciple is able to behold the Guru's feet—the gateway to liberation. In these feet Shiva and Shakti live as one, and through them the disciple realises that unity. He sees Shiva and Shakti as red and white lights shining through the Guru's feet. The Guru's feet should be worshipped every day, for by their means one easily realises the immanent and transcendent aspects of Shiva. Their lustre radiates in the upper spaces of the *sahasrar*.

Accessible and inaccessible to speech, mind
and imagination;
Shining white and red, red and white are the
Guru's feet.
Muktananda, worship them always.

श्रीगुरोः परमं रूपं
विवेकचक्षुषोऽमृतम् ।
मन्दभाग्या न पश्यन्ति
अन्धाः सूर्योदयं यथा ॥ (गुरुगीता ४९)

Shriguroh paramam rupam
vivekachaksuso'mritam,
Mandabhagya na pashyanti
andhah suryodayam yatha.
(*Guru Gita* 49)

The Guru's supreme form is pure nectar to the eye of discrimination. Just as a blind man cannot see the sunrise, likewise, an unfortunate fellow cannot perceive the Guru's glory.

The Guru's form is supremely enchanting. It is the endless treasure of Chiti's loveliness. Though the Guru has form, his inner essence is formless. His inner beauty is expressed in all the beautiful forms of the world. It can only be seen by a seeker whose inner eye has been opened through meditation. He alone can drink its nectar.

One who lacks devotion to the Guru is utterly unfortunate. Just as a blind man cannot see the sunrise, so he cannot behold the Guru's form.

The Guru manifests as conscious light, shimmering in red, white, yellow and blue shades. He who sees this inner radiance is liberated in this life.

श्रीनाथचरणद्वन्द्वं
यस्यां दिशि विराजते ।
तस्यै दिशे नमस्कुर्या–
द्भक्त्या प्रतिदिनं प्रिये ॥ (गुरुगीता ५०)

Shrinathacharanadvandvam
yasyam dishi virajate,
Tasyai dishe namaskuryad-
bhaktya pratidinam priye.
(*Guru Gita* 50)

O beloved, bow in the direction of the Guru's feet with devotion every day.

The Guru is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. He is without form and quality in his purest essence. But the disciple has a form and also qualities. He has a body. How can the bodiless communicate with the embodied? Therefore, the Guru assumes a particular form to awaken his disciples, to bestow yogic knowledge and uplift the world. A disciple should remember his Guru's feet and bow humbly in their direction. In other words, he should kneel at his Guru's feet in his inner mind.

The Supreme Being, the Guru, dwells in the centre of the *sahasrar*. To bow to Him inwardly is the highest salutation. However, one who is ardently devoted to the Guru will receive the blessed touch of his feet wherever he may lie prostrate with folded hands.

Muktananda, Nityananda's sacred feet lie in all four directions. He manifests as the world and his feet encompass the whole earth. Bow to him reverently.

तस्यै दिशे सततमञ्जलिरेष आर्ये
प्रक्षिप्यते मुखरितो मधुपैर्बुधैश्च ।
जागर्ति यत्र भगवान् गुरुचक्रवर्ती
विश्वोदयप्रलयनाटकनित्यसाक्षी ॥ (गुरुगीता ५१)

Tasyai dishe satatamanjaliresha arye
prakshipyate mukharito madhupairbudhaishcha,
Jagarti yatra bhagavan guruchakravarti
visvodayapralayanatakanityasakshi.
(*Guru Gita* 51)

O Noble One, the wise continually offer handfuls of flowers with butterflies humming around them to the

direction in which resides the sovereign God Guru, the eternal Witness of the creation and dissolution of the universe.

O thirsters after the nectar of devotion to the Guru! O bees hungry for the honey of the Guru's love! You want to drink the nectar from the lotus feet of the Guru which are in full bloom, giving out the rich fragrance of yoga and knowledge. Know that the Guru is seated in the Blue Pearl in the centre of the upper space of the *sahasrar*, enveloped by blue radiance. He is full of bliss. He is beyond all beyonds. He is the witness of everything, who never sleeps, who ever keeps awake in supreme bliss. To meditate on him is to offer him handfuls of flowers. That is the highest worship. A meditating yogi always dwells there.

Muktananda, Nityananda dwells in the conscious abode in the centre of the *sahasrar*. Offer flowers to him in meditation with love and devotion.

यत्पादरेणुकणिका
कापि संसारवारिधेः ।
सेतुबंधायते नाथं
देशिकं तमुपास्महे ॥ (गुरुगीता ५५)

Yatpada renu kanika
kapi samsaravaridheh,
Setubandhayate natham
deshikam tamupasmahe.
(*Guru Gita* 55)

I worship the Lord Guru: even a single particle of the dust of his feet forms a bridge strong enough to cross the ocean of change.

The vast ocean of *samsara* is very hard to cross. But with the support of even a single particle of the dust of the Guru's lotus feet, it can be crossed with ease. The remembrance of the Guru's feet is an absolutely dependable bridge. After a seeker has taken refuge at the Guru's sacred feet, those things that before bound him to birth and death, to pleasure and pain, now bring liberation. The world begins to appear as it really is—a visible image of the inner Spirit. Worship the Guru as the inner Self. Do not let the ocean of *samsara* frighten you. Be calm.

Climb onto the great bridge of Nityananda. In this way, Muktananda, accomplish your journey with ease.

अनेकजन्मसंप्राप्त–
सर्वकर्मविदाहिने ।
स्वात्मज्ञानप्रभावेण
तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (गुरुगीता ७३)

Aneka janma samprapta
sarva karma vidahine,
Svatma jnana prabhavena
tasmai shrigurave namah.
(*Guru Gita* 73)

Salutations to the Guru who, by the power of Self-knowledge, has burnt up all the karma accumulated through countless lives.

Because the embodied soul has existed from time without beginning, the accumulated store of its past karma is inconceivably vast. It is past karma which

causes happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain, in different ways. All are enchained in the shackles of karma. A man is born, dies, is reborn and redies, again and again. He transmigrates through different life-forms, high and low. He exhausts his past karma and creates new karma for the future. He remains bound to the wheel of karma, sorely afflicted.

When the Guru's grace is obtained, the flames of knowledge arising from within, burn all karma. Awareness of the Self has the power to annihilate all karma. I prostrate myself before the Guru who bestows this awareness and this knowledge.

Muktananda, when the fire of knowledge received from Guru Nityananda begins to blaze within, the karmic impressions of countless births will easily be consumed.

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं
लभ्यते गुरुभक्तितः ।
गुरोः परतरं नास्ति
ध्येयोऽसौ गुरुमार्गिभिः ॥ (गुरुगीता ८१)

Jnanam vijnanasahitam
labhyate gurubhaktitah,
Guroh parataram nasti
dhyeyo'sau gurumargibhih.
(*Guru Gita* 81)

By devotion to the Guru, one obtains knowledge as well as realisation. There is nothing higher than the Guru. Therefore, the devotees of the Guru should meditate on him.

Devotion to the Guru is the wishing cow, the wishing tree and the wishing jewel. *Jnana* is intellectual knowledge of truth, while *vijnana* is direct experiential awareness of truth. Knowledge, experience and the highest wisdom are gained with ease and without strain by devotion to the Guru. The devotees of the Guru should meditate on him alone. For them there is no other deity. Muktananda, worship Nityananda and meditate on him. He is the embodiment of knowledge and experience. You will achieve perfection.

गुरोः कृपाप्रसादेन
ब्रह्माविष्णुसदाशिवाः ।
समर्थाः प्रभवादौ च
केवलं गुरुसेवया ॥ (गुरुगीता ८३)

Guroh krupaprasadena
brahma vishnu sadashivah,
Samarthah prabhavadau cha
kevalam gurusevaya.
(*Guru Gita* 83)

Even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva acquired their cosmic potencies by the Guru's grace. The state of final Oneness is attained only through service to the Guru.

The scriptures ask, "Is there anything greater than the Self?" Nothing is greater than the Self—no deity, miracle, beloved friend, mantra, holy centre, not even the Guru. The Self which dwells within everyone is the supreme Guru. Without the grace of the inner Self, having an outer Guru is a mere display. The gods and

goddesses attain the ability to create worlds and exercise other powers by the grace of the inner Self alone.

The root of all realisations, the key to all spiritual practices, the eternal seed of the universe—Muktananda, that is Shri Nityananda.

यस्मिन्सृष्टिस्थितिध्वंस
निग्रहानुग्रहात्मकम् ।
कृत्यं पंचविधं शश्व-
द्भासते तं नमाम्यहम् ॥ (गुरुगीता ९४)

Yasmin shrishti sthiti dhvamsa
nigrahanugrahatmakam
Krityam panchavidham shashvad-
bhasate tam namamyaham.
(*Guru Gita* 94)

I bow to the Guru, the author of the five eternal cosmic processes—creation, sustenance, dissolution, control and award of grace.

Like the supreme Lord, the Guru constantly performs five functions. First, creation. He creates the divine consciousness, the awareness of the Self of all in the inner spaces of his disciple's heart.

Second, sustenance. In compassion he transmits his spiritual energy into his disciple. He sustains in him the new all-embracing consciousness, finally establishing him permanently in it.

Third, destruction. He destroys the world of ignorance that his disciple had inhabited before their meeting.

Fourth, control. He rescues his disciple's mind from uncontrolled dualistic and negative thinking.

Fifth, grace. He showers his grace upon his disciple abundantly, transmitting his Shakti into him. The disciple experiences an inner awakening and becomes aware of his own divinity.

I prostrate again and again to the adorable Guru who continually manifests his divine play, performing his five-fold function!

Muktananda, turn away from false gurus and charlatans. Clasp the feet of your Master Nityananda—the creator, sustainer, destroyer, controller and bestower of grace.

एवंविधं गुरुं ध्यात्वा
ज्ञानमुत्पद्यते स्वयम् ।
तत्सद्गुरुप्रसादेन
मुक्तोऽहमिति भावयेत् ॥ (गुरुगीता ९८)

Evamvidham gurum dhyatva
jnanam utpadyate svayam,
Tat sadguru prasadena
mukto'hamiti bhavayet.
(*Guru Gita* 98)

By meditating on the Guru in this manner, one automatically gains knowledge. By the grace of the Sadguru, become aware: 'I am liberated.'

Gurudev is Mahadev, Lord Shiva. Gurudev is Vishnu. He is Narayana, Shakti, Saraswati: the perfect deity. In fact, he is the Lord of all *yajnas*. He is Mahesh. He is

the prime source of the universe. Gurudev is the supreme truth. He is pure consciousness, the inner Self. When one meditates with this awareness, perfect knowledge arises from within. This is knowledge of the same order as that which came to great sages like Vyasa and Vasishtha, and great saints like Jnaneshwar and Tukaram. One who meditates on the Guru does not have to depend on external sources for knowledge. The self-existent inner treasure of wisdom becomes available to him of its own accord. He achieves the awareness: 'I am liberated. I am perfect'. He is supremely blessed.

Muktananda, when your Master Nityananda is the God of all gods, the inner essence of all *yajnas,* why should you adore other deities?

गुरुदर्शितमार्गेण
मनःशुद्धिं तु कारयेत्।
अनित्यं खण्डयेत्सर्वं
यत्किञ्चिदात्मगोचरम् ॥ (गुरुगीता ९९)

Guru darshita margena
manah shuddhim tu karayet,
Anityam khandayet sarvam
yat kinchidatma gocharam.
(*Guru Gita* 99)

Purify your mind by following the Guru's path. Detach yourself from all transient things perceived by the mind and senses.

There is only one way shown by the Guru—the way of Shaktipat, the way of grace, of benediction, of compassion.

When a seeker is blessed by the Guru, a new spiritual body is created inside him and he begins to move through different worlds. The Guru's Shakti works within him and the disciple receives currents of new inspiration and knowledge, and his mind is totally cleansed. As devotion to the Guru blazes in his heart, all his impurities are consumed. An aspirant should renounce the paths of affectation and hypocrisy and cling to the path of grace.

Since inner awakening is of the same character in everyone, why should Muktananda turn away from Nityananda's grace? He would become trapped in show and pretence.

ज्ञेयं सर्वस्वरूपं च
ज्ञानं च मन उच्यते।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयसमं कुर्यान्
नान्यः पन्था द्वितीयकः ॥ (गुरुगीता १००)

Jneyam sarva svarupam cha
jnanam cha mana uchyate,
Jnanam jneyasamam kuryan
nanyah pantha dvitiyakah.
(*Guru Gita* 100)

The essential nature of all is the object of knowledge, while the mind is the subject. Realise the identity of the subject and the object. There is no other way to liberation.

The universe is full of Chiti. Chiti has become everything. Nothing that is not Chiti can exist. Whatever is, whatever has been or will be—all is Chiti. Rama is Chiti,

the world is Chiti; day is Chiti and night is Chiti. This is true illumination.

The knower and the known and also knowledge itself are all Chiti. So, too, are the mind, intellect and ego. The mind is not only the knower, but also the thing known. This is true wisdom. The highest path is the path of equal vision.

Actor, instrument of action and action; perceiver, perception and perceived; animate and inanimate—Muktananda, these are your beloved Nityananda.

यावत्कल्पांतको देह-
स्तावदेव गुरुं स्मरेत् ।
गुरुलोपो न कर्तव्यः
स्वच्छंदो यदि वा भवेत् ॥ (गुरुगीता १०२)

Yavat kalpantako dehas
tavadeva gurum smaret,
Gurulopo na kartavyah
svachchando yadi va bhavet.
(*Guru Gita* 102)

Continue to remember the Guru until the end of time, as long as the body lasts. Never disobey the Guru even on attaining spiritual freedom—or on being driven away by him.

The Guru is the wishing cow, the wishing tree, the wishing jewel—what need is there to worship another? Be absorbed in remembrance of the Guru as long as breath remains in your body. By following the Guru's path you will attain the highest state of complete in-

dependence and total freedom. In that state a yogi is no longer subject to outer constraint, rules, convention, tradition or norm. He lives and moves freely without compulsion. But even when he has reached that state, the true child of the Guru will not cease being faithful and devoted to his Guru.

As long as the body is alive one must serve and adore his Guru. Muktananda, hell is only the lack of devotion to the Guru.

गुरुध्यानं तथा कृत्वा
स्वयं ब्रह्ममयो भवेत्।
पिण्डे पदे तथा रूपे
मुक्तोऽसौ नात्र संशयः ॥ (गुरुगीता ११९)

Gurudhyanam tatha kritva
svayam brahmamayo bhavet,
Pinde pade tatha rupe
mukto'sau natra samshayah.
(*Guru Gita* 119)

A disciple himself becomes divine by meditating on the Guru. There is no doubt that one whose Kundalini is awake, prana steady, and who sees the Blue Pearl, is liberated.

One comes to be like what one meditates on. If you think continually of sin you will become a sinner; if you think of ghosts you will become one. If you worship God you become God. It follows that you can become the Guru by constant remembrance of him. By means of

unceasing meditation of the Guru a seeker can easily attain oneness with the Absolute.

Pinde is the Kundalini Shakti. The sleeping Kundalini is awakened by meditation on the Guru, and the seeker is liberated from the bondage of its coils. *Pade* is *hamsa* or swan, the state of supreme discrimination. In the course of meditation on the Guru the seeker becomes aware of his identity with the Guru: *So'ham,* I am That. *Rupe* is the supreme Blue Pearl. In time the seeker has a vision of the Blue Pearl in meditation and later he passes beyond that into the pure and unstained supra-transcendental state. He becomes fully liberated. These are real experiences and are not to be doubted. You can have them yourself through meditation.

Muktananda, your Kundalini will be aroused spontaneously when you fasten your mind on Nityananda renouncing all other methods. The Blue Pearl will manifest and the sound of *So'ham* will resound powerfully.

GLOSSARY

(Words not defined in the text)

ajna chakra: spiritual centre between the eyebrows; seat of the Guru

asana: Yogic posture or exercise

atman: the soul; the inner Self

bhakta: devotee

dharma: righteousness

gunas: the three qualities which make up nature: sattva-purity; rajas-activity; tamas-inertia.

japa: repetition of a mantra

jiva: individual, bound creature

jivanmukta: one who is liberated while still in the body

jnani: knower of truth

kriya: spontaneous yogic movement

mantra: name of God

mudra: yogic gesture

prana: vital force of the body and universe which makes everything move

prana-apana: in-breath and out-breath

pranayama: control of the prana

sahasrar: thousand-petalled spiritual centre in the crown of the head

samadhi: the state of superconscious awareness of one's identity with the Absolute

siddhis: supernatural powers

sutra: aphorism

tattva: principle

Vedas: ancient Hindu scriptures

yajna: fire ceremony; sacrifice

"Constant awareness of the identity of the universe and the Self, of the all-pervading One Being, is the steady posture. .... One who has assumed this posture has no need to practise concentration, fixing his gaze above, below, or in the middle, on higher or lower centres, inside or outside his body. He doesn't turn his mind to some object of meditation. He doesn't have to meditate on the senses or primal elements. He dissolves all duality in unity with the Self. Remaining in this state is liberation, the transcendence of all phenomena. It is possible only as a result of initiation by a true Guru, which awakens the inner Shakti and stabilises the mind in the heart, that vast ocean of bliss, the scene of Parashakti's joyful reveling. Devotion to the Guru assures that the seeker will enter there."

— *Swami Muktananda*